#### Karni Golan

Architectural Sculpture in the Byzantine Negev

# Archaeology of the Biblical Worlds

Edited by Haim Goldfus and Aren Maeir

Volume 3

# Karni Golan

# Architectural Sculpture in the Byzantine Negev

Characterization and Meaning

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This work is dedicated to all my relatives who survived the Holocaust and remained loving human beings. And to those who perished.	

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"Architectural Sculpture from the Byzantine Negev (Golan 2020)"

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#### 1 The Foundation: Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduction

The term architectural decoration is a broad term that may refer to a variety of artifacts within a given structure. The present work focuses on a certain type of architectural ornamentation, namely carved decorations on stone. The types of decorated architectural elements that have been analyzed are: bases and podia, doorjambs, lintels, columns, capitals, cornices and arch stones. This is the first study to examine the entire range of architectural decorations carved in stone in the southern region of Israel in a comprehensive and comparative manner.

The chronological scope of the research is restricted to the Early Byzantine (Late Antique) period as it presents itself in the modern day region of the Negev Desert, Israel, from the early 4th to the early 8th centuries CE. The chronological scope of this study is a technical one. It should be acknowledged that just as there is the possibility that some of the decorated architectural elements were carved at the very end of the 3rd century CE, there is the possibility that some were created by Christians after the official succession of the Byzantine rule in the Negev. In fact, some of the architectural elements that clearly belong to the Byzantine period were used in spolia, by non-Christians; as is the case in the steps leading to mosque located in the vicinity of the South Church at Shivta. In addition, there is of course evidence that changes were made to the landscape of the settlement by the mere existence of this mosque and the inscriptions found within it and analyzed. Further evidence to this effect was reached through renewed excavations suggesting that Christians and Muslims might not have coexisted peacefully at Shivta at the end of the Byzantine period.<sup>2</sup> The main purpose of this study is to characterize and provide suggested meaning to the architectural decorations of the Byzantine Negev; therefore, it centers on the technical time period specified above and will not deal with issues that relate to site formation processes that are outside the scope of this work.

The proliferation of Christianity into the Negev occurred in the course of the 4th and 5th centuries CE. During this time period there was a rise in population in the Negev that brought about an increase in cultivated land and capital. Capital began to flow into this region already at the time of Constantine the Great and by the fifth century the imperial money was compounded with private donations. Much of this money was used for building churches, monasteries and hostels, the remains of which can be seen to this day in the Negev.<sup>3</sup> The decline in this new found prosperity began during

<sup>1</sup> The assemblage also includes a small group of three decorated floor tiles.

<sup>2</sup> Peers (2011); Moor (2013), 81–85; Tepper, Erickson-Gini, Farhi and Guy Bar-Oz (2018).

<sup>3</sup> Shereshevski (1991), 1, 3; Patrich (1995), 471.

the second half of the sixth century and gradually culminated with the abandonment of the Byzantine urban settlements in the eighth century CE.

The ancient political boundaries of this region were set during the end of the 3rd – beginning of the 4th centuries CE. At this time the Roman emperor Diocletian initiated, as part of his reforms, a new administrative division of the diocese of the Oriens. This meant that the Tenth Legion was re-station at Aila, under the administrative control of the province of Arabia. Since this left the dux Palaestinae with no legions at his command, a new division was made regarding the province. In order to maintain the Tenth Legion under the command of the dux Palaestinae the regions of the Negey, the southern region of the Transjordan and the Sinai, were annexed to the province formerly known as *Palaestina Salutaris*. This newly formed province was name *Palaestina Tertia*, its northern border being *Palaestina Prima* (Figure 1).<sup>4</sup>

The geographical boundaries of this study does not include the entire area of the province of *Palaestina Tertia*, but centers on the inhabited parts of the Negev Desert, as they were defined by J. D. Elliott, Jr. in his work, *The Elusa Oikoumene*. This region is bounded by ethnic, cultural, political, geographic and climatic boundaries. Hence, the area in question is bounded as follows: on the west, by a gap in settlement caused by the sand dunes known as Holot Halutza and Holot Agur – the western most settlement being Nessana; On the south and east by anticlines beyond which the soil salinity increases and rainfall decreases to below 100 mm. annually - the most southern settlement here is Oboda, and the easternmost is Mampsis; On the north the boundary can be demarcated by Be'er-Sheva. 6 In broader terms, the Elusa Oikoumene includes the Be'er-Sheva Valley and the Negev Highlands (Figure 2). The Byzantine settlements included within this region, from north to south are: Be'er-Sheva, Elusa, Rehovot-inthe-Negev, Sa'adon, Mampsis, Nessana, Shivta and Oboda. All of these sites are known by several names in Greek, Arabic and Hebrew;8 henceforth the sites are referred to by the names that are listed here. These names were selected according to the name under which these sites appear in the most broad or prominent publications.

<sup>4</sup> Tsafrir (1983), 48, 54-56; (1994), 15-16.

<sup>5</sup> Elliott (1982).

<sup>6</sup> Avi-Yonah (1933), 4-7; Gutwein (1981), 8.

<sup>7</sup> Elliott (1982), 4-9.

<sup>8</sup> Berosabba – Greek name or Be'er-Sheva – Hebrew name; Elusa – Greek name, El-Khalusa – Arabic name or Halutza - Hebrew name; Khirbet Ruheibeh - Arabic name or Rehovot-in-the-Negev - Hebrew name; Saudanon – possible Greek name, Khirbet el-Saadi – Arabic name or Sa'adon – Hebrew name; Mampsis – Greek name, Kurnub – Arabic name or Mamshit – Hebrew name; Nessana – Greek name, Auja el-Khafir – Arabic name or Nizzana – Hebrew name; Sobata – Greek name, A-Sbaita – Arabic name or Shivta - Hebrew name; Oboda/Eboda - Greek names, Abdeh - Arabic name or 'Avdat -Hebrew name; Shereshevski (1991), 20, 36, 49, 61, 83, 90 and 94; Gilead and Fabian (2008), 318-319.

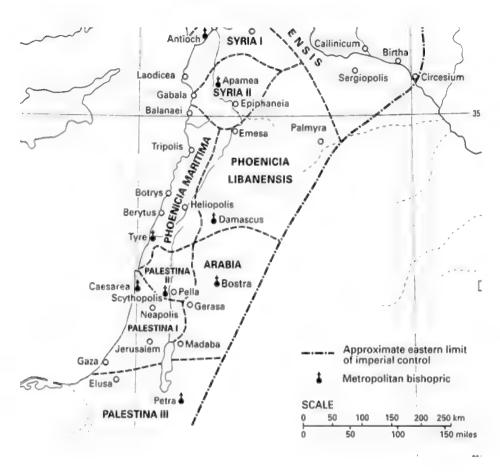


Figure 1: Provinces and principle cities of the east, 500 CE (Adapted from Kennedy 1982, p. 591).

### 1.2 The Methodology and Objectives of the Study

The research for this study was comprised of two primary stages. The first stage included the documentation and collection of data regarding the decorated architectural elements. In the second stage the accumulated data was thoroughly analyzed, and various aspects pertaining to the style of the decoration and the production of the architectural elements, were studied.

The data was collected from two main sources: a. scholarly literature and archival documents and b. the documentation of the artifacts included in the assemblage. The literary sources include excavation reports, archaeological surveys, catalogues of architectural elements and documents archived by the Israel Antiquities Authority. The archival material consists of documents pertaining to the Byzantine settlements of the Negev from both, the period of the British Mandate and post the establishment

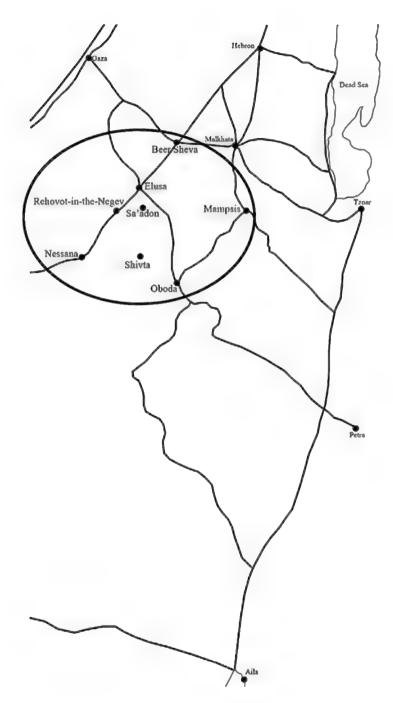


Figure 2: Map of the Elusa Oikoumene. The settlements included are within the area of the circle.

of the state of Israel. The architectural elements are documented at the archaeological sites and in storage at the Israel Antiquities Authority, This means that the assemblage comprises architectural elements from a known provenance, as well as a smaller group of artifacts, from unknown sites. The comparison of artifacts from the former group to the artifacts in the latter has enabled, in some cases, the suggestion of a provenance. The assemblage is not a complete corpus of the decorated architectural elements of the Byzantine Negev, but a large and representative sample. It stands to reason, that due to the size and variety of the assemblage, even if supplementary architectural elements were added, the additional data that would be gained would not alter the tendencies that have been observed.

The documentation of the artifacts includes written descriptions, detailed measurements and ample photographs. The data gathered is recorded in a digital database that accompanies this work (link, DOI: 10,5281/zenodo,3604068). The database is devised to suit the study of the architectural elements and is created in Microsoft's Access program. The data entered into the database includes information pertaining to: the location of the architectural element (past and current); citation if the element is published; the state of preservation; the general measurements; the raw material; the ornamentation – including carved, engraved and painted decoration. All details of the decoration are thoroughly described and measured. The thorough textual descriptions and the numerous measurements of the ornamentation are an essential part in the process of discerning any trends and tendencies regarding the artifacts. These observations, in turn, help formulate research questions through which new conclusions can be reached regarding the architectural decorations of the Byzantine Negev.

The information gathered in the digital database is conveyed in the catalogue that forms an integral part of this book. All of the individual artifacts in the assemblage are provided with a unique inventory label that identifies them in the database and the catalogue, thus connecting the two. The inventory label contains information regarding the origin and the function of the architectural element. The database is a tool for the organized storage of the data and the analysis of the artifacts, while the catalogue presents the architectural elements in a comprehensible manner and provides a typology. The typology of the artifacts is created on the basis of three factors: the provenance of the artifact, its architectural function and the style of the ornamentation. Therefore, all artifacts of the same provenance are presented together, divided according to function, and lastly to groups, of similarly decorated elements. Architectural elements of an unknown provenance or architectonic function are grouped together and then sorted according to the style of their ornamentation.

The digital database and catalogue allow for a more exhaustive analysis of the ornaments both, for the purposes of the present study, and future comparative studies of architectural decoration. The ornamentation was further analyzed on various levels. The first is the analysis of the motifs that form the decorational compositions. The majority of the motifs that ornament the artifacts are recurring; therefore, they are catalogued and a typology is created. The motifs are classified into seven main categories:

geometric motifs; rosettes; floral motifs; faunal motifs; architectural motifs; object-type motifs and figurative motifs. In each category the motifs are presented in order of complexity from the least to the most complex. The quantitative data from the motifs catalogue was analyzed using statistical tools, to gain further insights regarding the frequency of appearance of the various motifs, and their choice of placement on the various types of architectural elements. In addition, with the use of the through measurements taken of the motif of the "zigzag pattern", further conclusions were reached regarding certain aspects of the decoration of the elements. This type of analysis was conducted to illustrate the potential embodied within the comparative examination of motifs of the same type. Although, further analysis of this kind, regarding additional motifs, was not possible within the constraints of this study, the data has been recorded and is available to be used in future research projects.

The compositions are classified and the placement of the ornamentation is statistically and comparatively analyzed. This examination revealed the most frequent types of compositions. The process of production of the ornamented elements is briefly surveyed through the use of geological maps and comparative literature. Some conclusions regarding the production processes were drawn through observations made at the site of Shivta and consultations with a geologist. Furthermore, the location of the decoration was studied with an emphasis, not only on the types of architectural elements that are ornamented, but also on their location within the structure. A quantitative comparative study of decorated elements originating from public and private structures reveals an important and interesting tendency. Ornamented architectural elements are not only a common feature of public construction, but are also frequent in dwellings.

The newly discovered tendencies reflect the importance of architectural ornamentation in the life of the Byzantine inhabitants of the Negev and hence a semiotic study of the motifs is conducted. This part of the research explores non-linguistic signs as means of communication by the inhabitants of the Negev, in both an earthy and the spiritual realm; that is as a mode of communicating religious beliefs within the community, as well as diverting misfortune and invoking providence and good luck. The possible symbolic and apotropaic significance of the ornamentation is explored through an investigation of scientific literature pertaining to the disciplines of anthropology, art history and archaeology. The symbolic significance of ornamentation in general is studied, as well as, the semiotics of specific motifs that are part of the repertoire of architectural decoration in the Negev. On the basis of this study it is shown that even seemingly abstract geometric motifs may hold a symbolic and apotropaic value.

Lastly, all of the different observations described above are synthesized and conclusions are reached regarding the characteristics of the stone architectural decorations

<sup>9</sup> The geologist is Danny Itkin and I thank him for his assistance.

of the Byzantine Negev. Subsequent to this last stage in the analysis of the document assemblage of artifacts, similar decorated architectural elements from the regions surrounding the Negev are surveyed. This comparative analysis emphasizes the local characteristics of the decorations in the Negev and reveals their possible sources of influence.

# 1.3 History of Research of the Negev

The earliest explorers of the Negev were travelers who frequented the region in the 19th century. Amongst the first, was U. J. Seetzen who traveled through the Negev, in 1807, on his way to the Sinai. The importance of Seetzen's account is that it was novel for his period, but the geographical and archaeological information that could be gained from his reports is vague. E. Robinson and E. Smith continued exploring the region, in 1841, and gave descriptions of the roads that crossed it and the ancient settlements of the Negev Highlands; though with the misidentification of Nessana and Oboda. In 1842, J. Rowlands surveyed the area of 'Ein el-Guderat and 'Ein Kadis and identified the archaeological site with Kadesh Barnea, an identification that is accepted to this day.

More detailed exploration of the Negev began with E. H. Palmer, who in 1870-1871 was the first to draw plans of the sites that he surveyed. He also described certain elements of Desert agriculture, Byzantine monasticism in the southern Sinai and the life of the Bedouins in the Negev. A. Musil visited the Negev in 1897-1902, and provided further descriptions of the Byzantine settlements of the region. Later, the towns of Oboda, Shivta and Elusa were also surveyed by the Dominican monks J. A. Jaussen, R. Savignac and H. Vincent. Further studies of the ancient agriculture and climate of the Negev were conducted, in 1912, by E. Huntington.

The last surveys of the Negev prior to the First World War were conducted by the British archaeologists C. L. Woolley and T. E. Lawrence in 1914. Their survey was more accurate, and in depth, than the prior surveys and included more detailed description of all of the Byzantine towns with an archaeological outlook that was missing from the prior accounts. Following them, in 1916, the German explorer Th. Weigand, surveyed the towns of Oboda, Nessana, Shivta and Rehovot-in-the-Negev under the framework of the Committee for the Preservation of Monuments. His accounts include plans of the sites and aerial photographs. The last specific survey of a Byzantine town was conducted by G. E. Kirk and P. L. O. Guy who described the site of Mampsis in 1937. Subsequently, the first regional survey of the Negev region was conducted by N. Glueck between the years 1952 and 1963. During this survey Glueck documented over 500 sites and gave much attention and emphasis to the ceramic finds and the dating of these sites. The next major survey of the region was conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority starting in 1964 as part of the Israel Survey and continuing with the Negev Emergency Survey at the end of 1978, which was

conducted in order to precede the re-deployment of the IDF in the Negev following the Peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. 10

Surveys were not the only way in which the Byzantine Negev was explored. The following is a description of the major publications concerning the more dominant sites of the Negev. Excavations of the major sites began in the 1930's, starting with H. D. Colt's expedition which carried out excavations in the Byzantine towns of Shivta, Nessana, Elusa and Oboda between the years 1934-1938. From these excavations the only final report that was published was that of Nessana, which included the publication of the papyri that were discovered at the site. 11 Further research of Shivta, regarding the town plan and architectural decoration was done by Segal and published in 1983 and 1988 respectively and a study of the north church and monastery of Shivta was made by R. Rosenthal-Heginbottom as part of her PhD. Dissertation. 12 Recent excavations at Shivta centered on the transition of the site from Byzantine to Islamic rule.<sup>13</sup> The excavations of Nessana were continued by D. Urman and J. Shereshevski between 1987 and 1995, and the first volume of the final report was published in 2004. Recently an MA thesis further explored the military camp at Nessana and its position in the security systems in the southwest of Israel during Byzantine period.<sup>14</sup> Oboda was excavated subsequently by A. Negev together with M. Avi-Yonah and R. Cohen between 1958 and 1977, and the final report was published in 1997. The Roman army camp, located at the northeastern end of the 'Avedat spur, was excavated in 1999–2000 by P. Fabian and a preliminary report was published. 16 Negev also excavated the settlements of Mampsis and Elusa between 1968 and 1980. 17 The excavations of Elusa were continued in 1997-2000 by H. Goldfus and his colleagues, P. Fabian and B. Arubas. 18 Finally, the excavations at Rehovot-in-the-Negev were directed by Y. Tsafrir and the first volume of the final report was published in 1988. 19 Sa'adon, was the only, relatively large, late Roman-Byzantine settlement in the Negev never to be excavated at all. Survey of the site was conducted by Rubin and Shereshevski in 1984–1985.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The information about the history of research is based on the works of Haiman (1992), 22-48; Nachlieli (1999), 5–17; and Shereshevski (1991), XI–XII.

<sup>11</sup> Casson and Hettich (1950); Kraemer (1958); Colt (1962).

<sup>12</sup> Segal (1983, 1988); Rosenthal-Heginbottom (1974).

<sup>13</sup> Tepper, Weissbrod and Guy Bar-Oz (2015); Fuks, Weiss, Tepper and Bar-Oz (2016); Tepper, Erickson-Gini, Farhi and Guy Bar-Oz (2018).

<sup>14</sup> Urman (2004); Lifshits (2015).

<sup>15</sup> Negev (1997).

<sup>16</sup> Fabian (2011).

<sup>17</sup> Negev (1988); Negev (1993).

<sup>18</sup> Arubas and Goldfus (2008).

<sup>19</sup> Tsafrir (1988).

<sup>20</sup> Rubin and Shereshevski (1988).

More comprehensive studies written in relation to the Negev during the Byzantine period centered on three aspects: Byzantine agriculture and irrigation systems, demography and urbanism.<sup>21</sup> For example, Kedar investigated agricultural issues in the area of the Negev Highlands, and Rubin, centered his doctoral research on the settlement pattern and the agricultural base in the environs of Rehovot-in-the-Negev.<sup>22</sup> Another work, which deals both with the settlement pattern of the population in the Negev and how it is affected by the climate and agricultural potential of the region during the Byzantine period, is Erez-Edelson's study into settlement distribution and runoff farming in the Negev.<sup>23</sup>

Elliott's work, examined the Elusa Oikoumene from a geographical, environmental, ethnographic and historical point of view, is among the most important studies focusing, to a large extent, on demographic issues in the Negev.<sup>24</sup> Haiman's work on settlement patterns of the Negev Highlands analyzed the findings of the Negev Emergency Survey and encompasses settlements from the Early Bronze Age up to the Early Islamic period.<sup>25</sup> Additional studies that have emerged as a result of the Negev Emergency Survey are S. A. Rosen's study of Nomadism in the Negev during the Byzantine period and G. Avni's study of the interaction between nomads and towndwellers.26

Among the more important studies of urbanism and the urban settlements of the Negev are Gutwein's Third Palestine - A Regional Study in Byzantine Urbanization; Rubin's The Negev as a Settled Land -Urbanization and Settlement in the Desert in the Byzantine Period; and Shereshevski's Byzantine Urban Settlements in the Negev Desert.<sup>27</sup> These studies examine the factors influencing the development of urbanization from geographical, economic, agricultural and historical outlooks, as well as the urban centers themselves from the archaeological standpoint in regards to town plans and demographic compositions

# 1.4 History of Research of Stone Architectural Decorations in Israel and the Negev Desert

The review of the major studies conducted about the Negev region during the Early Byzantine period, as presented above, clearly shows that thus far only partial work

<sup>21</sup> e.g. Mayerson (1960 and 1994); Kedar (1967); Evenari, Shanan and Tadmor (1971); Rubin (1986); Bruins (2002).

<sup>22</sup> Kedar (1967); Rubin (1986).

<sup>23</sup> Erez-Edelson (2004).

<sup>24</sup> Elliott (1982).

<sup>25</sup> Haiman (1992).

<sup>26</sup> Rosen (1987); Avni (1996).

<sup>27</sup> Gutwein (1981); Rubin (1990); Shereshevski (1991).

has centered on the broader analysis of the artistic aspects relating to the art and architecture of this period. The majority of studies dealing with architectural decorations in Israel during Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period have focused on the northern region of the country and more on Jewish than Christian art, or on how the two relate to each other. These works also emphasized the study of synagogues and churches, their general plans, and their mosaic decoration, and less so on stone architectural decorations.<sup>28</sup> A general study of architectural decorations and the oriental influences on the motifs appearing on architectural elements and sarcophagi throughout Israel was prepared by Avi-Yonah. This study examined various groups of motifs and architectural elements with an emphasis on those motifs and compositions that draw their influence from oriental art and defines the characteristics of this form of art; it does not however, provide a comprehensive corpus of decorated architectural elements from this period.<sup>29</sup>

The most comprehensive study of architectural decoration during Late Antiquity was conducted by Turnheim and deals with architectural decoration in the northern region of Israel during the Roman and Byzantine periods. Her work includes a catalogue of decorated stone architectural elements and an in depth analysis of the composition and the motifs and their origins. There is also a discussion of the technical quality of the decorations, and the origins of the artisans and their workshops. The greatest focus of this study is centered on the architectural decorations dated to the Roman period, and on the art in the synagogues of northern Israel.<sup>30</sup>

The most in-depth study dedicated to the architectural decoration in the Negev during the Early Byzantine period is that by Segal in his work Architectural Decorations in Byzantine Shivta, Negev Desert, Israel. He catalogued and examined the architectural decorations on the artifacts from his research of the Byzantine town of Shivta. The analysis includes a description of the architectural elements and the decorations, and a general analysis of the major motifs. His publication also contains a corpus of decorated architectural items from the collection of the Negev Museum in Be'er-Sheva. This is the only corpus that was created based on the balk of the architectural elements found at a major site in the Negev. Nonetheless, it does not contain comparisons to decorations found on artifacts from other sites in the region. For this reason, it provides us only with a narrow, keyhole perspective, into the world of architectural stone decoration. A widerange study, such as the one proposed here, will offer far greater knowledge of the most prevalent motifs and compositions, their origins and the artisans and workshops from which they hail.

<sup>28</sup> Few examples are: Hachlili (1988, 1995, 1996, 1997); Ovadiah (1970, 2002); Tsafrir (1987).

<sup>29</sup> Avi-Yonah (1981), 1-117.

<sup>30</sup> Turnheim (1987).

<sup>31</sup> Segal (1988).

Other sources of information regarding architectural sculpture can be found in the final reports of excavations conducted in several Byzantine towns of the Negev. In 1962 Colt published the architectural decorations found at Nessana as part of the publication of the final report of the site.<sup>32</sup> In his report Colt briefly discusses the raw materials used and notes that, " ... many of the designs have a distinctly local flavour and are only remotely influenced by the style in use elsewhere."33 Colt offers concise descriptions of some of the artifacts with no separation between the marble liturgical furnishings and the limestone architectural elements.

In the final report of the excavations at Rehovot-in-the-Negev, <sup>34</sup> J. Patrich discusses the different techniques that were employed in the dressing and the decoration of the architectural elements and the raw materials that were used. Patrich also analyzes, in general terms, some of the major motifs and discusses artistic influences. He notes that designs and patterns in the dressing and the decoration of the artifacts were made by local artists and that they are similar to others found in all of the Byzantine cities of the Negev and points out the continuation of Eastern and Palestinian traditions in stone carving and the noticeable heritage left by the local Nabataean culture.<sup>35</sup> Patrich's work also discusses both the liturgical furnishings and the architectural decoration with no distinction. An extensive study on liturgical furnishings with some emphasis on the Negev region was conducted by L. Habas. In her work she made references to architectural sculpture but only in way of parallels to the liturgical furnishing elements that were presented in her work.<sup>36</sup>

Of the three major Byzantine towns, Oboda, Mampsis and Elusa, which were excavated by Negev there are publications of the architectural elements from Oboda and Mampsis. At Oboda, Negev discusses selected decorated architectural elements from the site in the varia section of the final report. In this chapter, Negev does not differentiate between the liturgical furnishings found at the site and decorated architectural elements, and while he does give descriptions of the decorations he does not analyze the various motifs.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, in the final report of the architecture of Mampsis, Negev gives a short description of various architectural elements and liturgical furnishings without presenting a stylistic analysis of the motifs and compositions. 38 The above survey of the relevant literature and archaeological work done to date, on the decorated architectural sculpture of the Late Antique Negev, clearly demonstrates the lack of in-depth and encompassing research of the type provided in the present work.

<sup>32</sup> Colt (1962), 48-50.

<sup>33</sup> Colt (1962), 48.

**<sup>34</sup>** Patrich (1988), 97–133.

<sup>35</sup> Patrich (1988), 97-99.

<sup>36</sup> Habas (1994).

<sup>37</sup> Negev (1997), 177-180.

<sup>38</sup> Negev (1988), 75-108.

# 2 The Building Blocks: A Catalogue

# 2.1 Background

The present catalogue is currently the largest sample of decorated stone architectural elements from the Byzantine Negev to have been comparatively studied. The catalogue includes a variety of architectural elements: floor tiles, bases and podia, doorjambs, lintels, columns, capitals, cornices and arch segments. A group of architectural elements that could not be defined as part of any of the above listed types was also documented and analyzed. The origin of most of the architectural elements in the catalogue is known. Elements from all of the major Byzantine settlements of the region defined as the *Elusa Oikoumene*, the populated area of the Negev Desert at the time, are represented. The decorated architectural elements are presented according to several sub-divisions, the first of which is their provenance. In order to introduce the largest variety of elements at the beginning of this catalogue, the sites are presented according to the size of the sample of architectural elements that originates from them; from the settlement with the largest sample to the one with the smallest. The settlements as they appear in this catalogue are: Shivta, Oboda, Mampsis, Nessana, Be'er Sheva, Rehovot-in-the-Negev, Sa'adon and Elusa.<sup>1</sup>

The total number of architectural elements presented in the catalogue from any of these sites does not bear any indication to the importance or affluence of the site during the Byzantine period. Although this catalogue is comprehensive it could not have included the total of all of the decorated architectural elements from the Byzantine Negev. An unspecified number of elements have been lost to looting. weathering and a great number is probably still located under piles of collapse and sand in the sites themselves. The sample in this catalogue was also influenced by site preservation and accessibility. The catalogue also includes a group of 56 artifacts that are currently stored at the Israel Antiquities Authority storerooms of unknown provenance.<sup>2</sup> The reasons for including these artifacts are twofold, First, comparatively these elements are similar in function, form and the style of decoration to other architectural elements from the Negev region. Second, through a comparative study of their ornamentation with the decoration of architectural elements from a known provenance, when possible, suggestions were made as to their place of origin. Although, only architectural elements that could have been thoroughly documented are included in the catalogue, additional elements are presented in the appendix. Some of these elements are ones that have only been partially documented while

<sup>1</sup> For a further explanation regarding the names of these sites see p. 3 and n. 8 in Chapter I.

**<sup>2</sup>** The catalogue includes architectural elements with a known provenance as well as of unknown sites that are currently stored at the Israel's National Treasury. These were studied with the kind permission of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

others have been observed only through photographs obtained courtesy of the Israel Antiquity Authorities Archives.

The distribution of the architectural elements according to function and place of origin is illustrated in Table 1. In total, the catalogue includes 357 decorated architectural elements that have been thoroughly documented.

The typology of the decorated architectural elements in the catalogue is according to the following hierarchy: place of origin (when known), architectonic function (when known), the most dominant stylistic features in the decoration, and lastly, by the complexity of the decorational composition. The stylistic typology is not rigid and conforms to the ornamentation of each group of elements that are presented according to their architectural function. The architectural elements in each of the site sub-chapters are presented according to their function in the structure from its base to the top; beginning with floor tiles and bases and ending with arches, with an additional category for elements with an undefined architectural context.

Each of the architectural elements has a specific inventory label that provides certain details about the artifact. For example, the first architectural element presented in the catalogue is item SH.A.10.BP.1. The first part of the inventory number – SH – is an abbreviation of the name of the site of its provenance, in this case, Shivta, The second part - A - refers to the structure, unit or feature in the site where the element is located, in this case, the "Pool House". The third part of the inventory - 10 - refers to the room number within the structure or unit. The fourth part – BP – refers to the architectural function of the element, that is, BP, Bases and Podia. The last part of the inventory label -1 - refers to the serial number of this specific element within the group of all of the architectural elements with the same function that are included in the catalogue.<sup>3</sup> Architectural elements that were not documented in situ have shorter inventory labels, because less information is known of their exact location.

In the following Table 2, a legend for the abbreviations that appear in the inventory labels is provided:

The architectural elements, presented in this catalogue, have been thoroughly documented. The majority of the elements have been photographed by the author. Photographs for elements that are located in storage were provided by the Israel Antiquities Authority. In order to document the elements as thoroughly as possible, photographs of all visible facets of an architectural element were taken. Therefore, each architectural element is presented on a separate plate. Providing only one view, for instance, of the decorated face of the element, can hinder its correct classification for those who cannot examine the artifacts in person. The plates are ordered

<sup>3</sup> Gaps in the serial numbers of any element category are a result of changes made following the analysis of the elements; either because certain elements have been re-classified or taken out of the assemblage due to chronological or other considerations.

Table 1: The Decorated Stone Architectural Elements Divided by Site and Type.

Type	Number of Items	r of Items Number In Situ Shivta Nessana	Shivta	Nessana	Elusa	Rehovot	Mampsis	Sa'adon	Oboda	Be'er-Sheva	Elusa Rehovot Mampsis Sa'adon Oboda Be'er-Sheva National Treasury
Floor tiles	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	ε.	0	0
Bases and Podia	59	37	31	5	0	0	5	0	12	0	9
Doorjambs	12	4	9	0	0	0	5	₩	0	0	0
Lintels	<b>7</b> 7	4	16	0	₽	1	00	0	7	2	6
Columns	6	0	0	8	0	0	2	0	4	0	0
Capitals	107	9	23	11	2	5	21	0	00	10	27
Cornices	57	31	24	ω	0	4	ω	₩	17	2	m
Arch Segments	33	E	15	0	0	1	2	2	00	0	5
<b>Undefined Context</b>	33	1	m	5	0	4	11	0	7	0	9
TOTALS	357	89	118	27	m	12	57	4	99	14	56

Table 2: Legend	for the	Abbreviations	in the	Inventory Labels.
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Sites	<b>Architectural Functions of Elements</b>
Shivta = SH	Floor Tiles = FT
Oboda = OD	Bases and Podia = BP
Mampsis = MP	Doorjambs = DJ
Nessana = NS	Lintels = LT
Be'er-Sheva = BS	Columns = CL
Rehovot-in-the-Negev = RN	Capitals = CP
Sa'adon = SD	Cornices = CR
Elusa = EL	Arches = AR
	Elements of Undefined Architectural Context = UC

according to the order in which they appear in the catalogue. The inventory and plate numbers are provided in the textual descriptions of all the elements. In addition, plans of the sites and specific units within them are also provided. Architectural elements that are located in situ have been marked on these plans and plan numbers are referenced in the catalogue. In order to help make the elements that are located in situ easily visible on the plans, the first part of their inventory label, containing the location information, has been omitted. Each element is marked only by its function and serial number. The location of the decorated architectural elements in the plans does not indicate centers or concentrations of decorated elements, it is simply a reflection of the areas of the sites that have been excavated or where rubble was cleared. This shows the accessibility to the artifacts and not a choice made in ancient times.

Apart from photographic documentation the general measurements of the elements have been recorded as well as the specific measurements of all details of their decoration; e.g. from the height and length of a "rope pattern" band to the average thickness of the engraved diagonal lines that form it. All the measurements appear in the digital data base, which is accessible through the following link. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3604068. It was done in this way in order to not clutter the description of the architectural elements and their decorations in the catalogue.

The database was created in Microsoft's Access program, specifically, for the purposes of this study. The elements are divided according to their architectonic function. The categories of the forms are: arches, bases and podia, capitals, columns, cornices, decorated stones of undefined architectural context, doorjambs, floor tiles and lintels. The fields in all of the forms are mostly the same, apart from minor adjustments that relate to the data about certain types of elements. For example, the form for "cornices" includes the field "protruding from wall"; since this data is not relevant regarding the other types of architectural elements it does not appear in other forms.

The database includes the following information: date of documentation; provenance and current location; state of preservation; citation of publication in which the element appears; general measurements and description; raw material; whether the element was painted; source of photographs; direction of photographs; general description of the decorational composition and a detailed description of the element and its decoration, including specific measurements. Most of the information on the database forms has been filled on site and provides a working description of the elements. The descriptions have not been edited in order to provide the most candid observation of the decorations with as little interpretation as possible. The descriptions were done systematically, most commonly from the top of the element to its bottom and in the case of lintels from left to right. In order to find a specific element in the database one should place the cursor on the "Inventory" field, select the "find" key and type the element's inventory number in the dialogue box.

The plates and plans are provided in order to enhance the text and the images within it, while all additional reference and quantitative information are provided in a separate digital database, which can be accessed through the following link. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3604068.

## 2.2 Shivta

#### 2.2.1 Introduction

The site of Shivta is located in the central Negev approximately 40 kilometers southwest of Be'er-Sheva (**plan 1**). Unlike the other Byzantine "towns" of the Negev, Shivta is located far from the main roads and therefore was not as exposed to stone robbery; a phenomenon that befell other sites at various periods after they have been abandoned. As a result, this is the best preserved settlement in the Negev. The overall size of the settlement was about 8 hectares and its population ranged from 1,000 to 4,000 inhabitants according to various estimates. The village of Shivta was established at the end of the 4th century beginning of the 5th CE and continued to exist for about a century after the Moslem conquests. This makes it one of the latest settlements to be established in the Negev during the Byzantine period. A Mosque was discovered adjacent to one of the three churches found at the site.

The inhabitants of the village were Christians as attested to by the three churches and one possible monastery. Agricultural installations such as the wine presses, the livestock pens around the periphery of the settlement, and the many dams in the *wadis*, indicate that the livelihood of the residents of Shivta was predominately based on agricultural-pastoralism and possibly trade. This is no small feat considering that there are no springs or wells in or around the site and that all of the water supply for

agricultural and other uses had to have come from collecting the runoff water of the summer rains. For this purpose household and public cisterns were constructed as well as two large water reservoirs that still stand dominantly in the center of the village.

The settlement of Shivta may have had a few main streets, but overall the construction had no orthogonal plan, although a few insulae can be distinguished. The houses around the periphery of the site were constructed abutting each other so that their external walls formed a type of boundary around the settlement which may have served as somewhat of a defense against both invaders and sandstorms. There is no real archaeological evidence as to the chronological order in which the site developed and any attempts to suggest that the southern quarters of the site were populated by the lower classes on the basis of lack of architectural decorations are misguided. The reason that less architectural decorations were documented in the southern parts of Shivta simply stems from the fact that the central and northern parts of the site were the only excavated regions and the dwellings of the southern part of Shivta remain in big piles of collapse hindering the identification and documentation of more decorated architectural elements.4

#### 2.2.2 Bases and Podia

This category includes two distinct types of architectural elements, doorjamb bases and podia; the first appear at the bottom of the architrave of doorjambs and the latter were placed below the columns in the Central Church. All of the doorjamb bases were documented in situ and due to the nature and variety of their decorations they are separated here to two general sub-categories: "minimalistic composition" and "complex composition". The podia were placed into one category as they are all decorated identically and are located in the same structure at the site.

## 2.2.2.1 Minimalistic Composition

The first group of bases includes seven doorjamb bases that were documented in situ at three different structures at the site. All of these bases are decorated in a minimalistic fashion with a small number of moldings and reliefs. The first three doorjamb bases, SH.A.10.BP.1, SH.A.10.BP.2 and SH.A.9.BP.3 are located at two different entrances to rooms at the "Pool House" (pls. 1-3, plan 2) a structure located in the southwestern part of the site (plan 1).<sup>5</sup> All three of these bases were carved in

<sup>4</sup> The above introduction is based on: Gutwein (1981), 165–167,235; Elliot (1982), 113; Rubin (1990),

<sup>9-10;</sup> Shereshevski (1991), 61-82; Baumgarten (2004), 17; cf. Segal (1983).

<sup>5</sup> Doorjamb bases SH.A.10.BP.1 and SH.A.10.BP.2 are located at opposite sides of the entrance to room 10, and doorjamb base SH.A.9.BP.3 is located at the southern side of the entrance to room 9. Cf. Segal (1983), 33-34 regarding the "Pool House".

limestone and have a protruding facet in the shape of a trapezoid with one side having two right angles. The front and narrower side of the trapezoidal facets are decorated with two graded fillets at the top and a smooth and upright band at the bottom. There are minute differences in the measurements of the heights of the fillet bands between these three doorjamb bases, on each individual base. The heights of the fillets are, however, exactly the same.

Two doorjamb bases with the same type of decoration as the previously described bases are located on opposite sides of the central entrance leading from the atrium of the North Church into the nave. Bases SH.N.2.BP.49 and SH.N.2.BP.50 were carved from chalk and have a decorated protruding trapezoidal facet that is in the shape of a regular trapezoid on the front side of the element (pls. 4–5, plan 3).<sup>7</sup> The composition of the decoration is identical to the one ornamentation the bases at the "Pool House", with the exception of a deep triangular groove that defines the top of the upright band that is located at the bottom of the composition. Here too, the heights of the fillet bands are slightly different between the two bases, but are the same in appearance on each base. This might indicate that the same technique was employed in the carving of the bases from the "Pool House" and the North Church.

The last two architectural elements (SH.C.1.BP.15 and SH.C.1.BP.16) that belong to the category of doorjamb bases are located on the opposite sides of the entrance leading from the Central Church to the "Governor's House" (pls.6–7, plan 4). These two bases were also carved in chalk and although they are decorated in a minimalistic fashion, their shape and decoration are different than the previously described elements. These two bases are rectangular ashlars with a single protruding trapezoidal facet on their front side. The protruding facet is slightly shorter at the top than the rest of the element, and is decorated with a band of bas relief "zigzag" pattern of upright triangles. At the bottom of the trapezoidal face there is a fillet. The measurements of the various parts of the decoration vary by a few millimeters to a centimeter between the two bases and therefore it is highly likely that they were produced by the same hand.

## 2.2.2.2 Complex Composition

Ten doorjamb bases decorated with compositions, which include more than two motifs, were documented at a private residence, and the South Church. The first three bases in this category are located at two different entrances, in a private

**<sup>6</sup>** The narrower side of the protruding trapezoidal facet of base SH.A.9.BP.3 is very weathered. It is highly likely that it was decorated as well.

<sup>7</sup> Doorjamb base SH.N.2.BP.50 is published in: Segal (1988), 87.

<sup>8</sup> The front and the narrower side of the protruding trapezoidal facet are decorated in a continuous fashion.

**<sup>9</sup>** Doorjamb base SH.C.1.BP.16 is published in: Segal (1988), 86. Cf. Segal (1983), 156–157 regarding the "Governor's House".

dwelling, located at the southwestern section of the site known also as the "Stable House" (plans 1-2). 10 All of the bases are decorated on two sides of their protruding trapezoidal facets, but uniquely, the decoration is not continuous on both sides.

Doorjamb base SH.I.1.BP.39 is located at the eastern side of the entrance from the courtyard to Room 1 in the "Stable House" (pl. 8, plan 2). The decoration of the front trapezoidal facet begins 4.1cm from the top with a band of right-side up "zigzag pattern", followed by a flat band that separates it from a slightly narrower band of upside-down "zigzag pattern". Towards the bottom there is a "rope pattern band". 11 The narrower side of the trapezoidal facet is very weathered, but part of the decoration is still visible. A few centimeters below the top of the facet there is a band of elongated dentils, in bas relief, followed by a thin semi-circular band. Below this band there is another row of dentils shorter than the top row.

Doorjamb SH.I.1.BP.40 is located at the opposite side of the same entrance as base SH.I.1.BP.39 (pl. 9, plan 2). 12 The decoration comprises a row of right-side up "zigzag pattern" band, followed by a semi-circular band. At the center of the facet there is a band of "X's in square frames" and immediately below it a "rope pattern" band. The narrower side of the trapezoidal facet is very weathered, but seems to have been decorated, at its top section, with two rows of right-side up "zigzag pattern", separated by a thin semi-circular band.

The third doorjamb base, SH.I.2.BP.41, is located at the entrance to Room 2 from the courtyard (pl.10, plan 2). The front trapezoidal facet is decorated, at its top section, with a bas relief band of right-side up "zigzag pattern" followed by double, slightly, convex bands. This is followed by a "rope pattern" band and below it a slightly convex band. The narrower side of the trapezoidal facet is decorated with the same composition with the exception that the top band of the composition is decorated with a dentil pattern rather than a "zigzag pattern". At the bottom, the composition is bordered by two slightly convex bands. The style of the decoration of these three doorjamb bases, from the "Stable House", is very similar suggesting that they were possibly dressed by the same artisan.

Four doorjamb bases were documented at two different entrances leading from the narthex of the South Church into the basilica (plans 1 and 5). Each pair of bases in each entrance share a similar style of decoration, but amongst the two pairs there are no similarities, and they may have been decorated by different artisans. The first two bases in this sub-category are located at the entrance leading from the narthex to the nave of the church. Doorjamb base SH.P.BP.43 is the southern of the two bases (pl. 11, plan 5). 13 The protruding trapezoidal facet of this base

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Segal (1983), 87-123 regarding the "Stable House".

<sup>11</sup> The very bottom of the trapezoidal face was not preserved, so the bottom of the composition is unknown.

<sup>12</sup> The front side of the trapezoidal facet of this doorjamb base is partially broken.

<sup>13</sup> Segal (1988), 83.

is decorated on two of its sides with a series of moldings and reliefs. The decoration on the front side of the facet begins slightly below the top of the element with a bas relief fillet followed by a gap, a double semi-circular band, a gap. It is followed by another double semi-circular band, a gap and towards the bottom, a double band of "rope pattern" motif. The narrower side of the trapezoidal facet is decorated with a continuous decoration, but lacks the double "rope pattern" band at the bottom. The northern doorjamb, SH.P.BP.44, is decorated, on both sides of the trapezoidal facet, with a series of bas relief bands and fillets (pl. 12, plan 5). <sup>14</sup> There is a slightly convex band below the top followed by a thinner fillet band. At the center of the trapezoidal facet there is a relatively wide fillet band, and another one towards the bottom of the trapezoidal facet.

The protruding trapezoidal facets of bases SH.P.BP.45 and SH.P.BP.46 are located in the center of the rectangular ashlar that forms the base **(pls. 13–14, plan 5).** <sup>15</sup> Therefore, they only have one decorated side. This is ornamented with a bas relief composition. These two bases are located on opposite sides of the entrance leading from the narthex to the northern aisle of the church. The southern base of the two, SH.P.BP.45, is decorated with a band of schematized dentils. It is followed by a sunken rectangular area that takes up the rest of the face of the trapezoidal facet. This sunken rectangle is inhabited with three rows of bas relief "star-like shapes in frames". <sup>16</sup> There are three "star-like shapes" in each row. The top row of the "star-like shapes" is less than half the height of the two rows below it. The two outer "star-like shapes" of the top row have a carving of an additional horizontal arm across their center. The northern doorjamb base, SH.P.BP.46, is decorated in a similar fashion, with some differences; instead of the top dentil band there is a thin fillet band and the three rows of "star-like shapes in frames" are all roughly the same height.

Two doorjamb bases that are decorated in a unique style are bases SH.P.3. BP.47, and SH.P.3.BP.48 **(pls. 15–16, plan 5).**<sup>17</sup> These two elements are located on either side of a currently blocked entrance, leading from the northern side room of

<sup>14</sup> Segal (1988), 82.

**<sup>15</sup>** For SH.P.BP.45 see Segal (1988), 81; for SH.P.BP.46 see Segal (1988), 80.

**<sup>16</sup>** The motif of the "star-like shapes in frames" is commonly referred to in scholarly literature as "X's in frames" or "Union Jacks", for an explanation for the suggested renaming of this motif see: Ch. III-The Motifs, motif number 16.

<sup>17</sup> For SH.P.3.BP.47 see Segal (1988), 128. See Segal (1988), 130 for SH.P.3.BP.48. Segal suggests that these two elements may have originally been cornices as their heights may be too great to presume that they are lintels. This seems highly unlikely upon examination of the data collected in the present study. Both elements are over 40cm in height. The average height of the 24 cornices documented from Shivta is 16cm (the highest cornice is 23.1cm in height) while the average height of the 15 lintels documented from the site is 36cm (the highest lintel is 42.7cm in height). Therefore, if a hypothesis could be made as to the original function of these elements it would be more plausible to suggest that they were part of a lintel. Although, their ornamentation indicates that they were

the narthex to the baptistery. Although, both of these bases are decorated with different compositions, the style of the decoration is very similar. It is clear they were ornamented by the same hand. The decoration is carved on the inner or narrower side of the bases, and the front side is left unusually bare. The composition of the decoration is complex, reflecting a "horror vacui" style.

Doorjamb base SH.P.3.BP.47 is decorated in bas and high relief; with a band of elongated dentils, a semi-circular band with a horizontal groove in its center, a fillet, a deep and wide groove, and at the bottom a band of short dentils. Below these bands there is a wider band of what could be described as a band of "duo-glyphs" and "metopes". The pattern of this band alternated between a column of bosses adiacent to a rectangular vertical column and a "metope" inhabited by two concentric circles around a boss. This is followed by a relatively thin band of "bead-and-reel pattern". The band comprises alternating lozenge shaped beads that are hollowedout and cylindrical reels. This band is defined on top and bottom by semi-circular bands with a thin groove running along their center. The bottom half of the element is dominated by a bas relief of downward turned schematic leaves. The veins of the leaves are marked by deep diagonal grooves.

Doorjamb base SH.P.3.BP.48 is paired with the previously described architectural element. At the top of the base the composition of the decoration is the same as on base SH.P.3.BP.47, with the exception of a "rope pattern" band in place of the rectangular fillet band. The bottom half of the element is decorated with a relief of an ornate jar. The neck of the jar is fluted with two vertical rectangular bands in its center; the body of the vessel is round with a concentric band of dentils around the inside of its outline. The center of the body of the vessel is concave. The base is also fluted and the handles have volutes at both ends. At the bottom the composition is bordered by a thin rectangular band followed by a band of square shaped dentils.

### 2.2.2.3 Column Bases

Four decorated round column bases have been studied at Shivta, none of which are located in situ. All of these architectural elements are decorated around their circumference with a combination of lathe-made grooves and fillets. The column drums can be divided into two categories, on the basis of their decoration, with two column drums in each.

The first category includes column bases SH.P.7.BP.59 and SH.N.2.BP.60 (pls. 17–18). The first is currently located in the South Church and the latter in the North Church, Both are decorated towards their bottom with a few thin grooves. These are followed by a wide protruding band that is also decorated with thin engraved grooves. The sequence of the decoration of column base SH.P.7.BP.59 is three thin

probably not part of the same lintel, since if they were that would mean that the decoration of the lintel would not have been continuous and uniform.

grooves clustered together. The grooves are followed by a gap, and then, the protruding band on which there are two pairs of thin grooves. <sup>18</sup> Column base SH.N.2. BP.60 is more weathered, but appears to have a more evenly spaced sequence of thin grooves above and on the protruding band (plan 3).

The second category of decorated column bases includes two elements decorated with a sequence of grooves and two (instead of one) protruding bands. Column base SH.P.7.BP.61 is located in the South Church and is decorated towards the bottom with a wide protruding band covered with three spaced grooves. These are followed by a gap in which there are three spaced grooves, and then another protruding band with three spaced grooves (pl. 19, plan 5).<sup>19</sup> The second column base in this category, SH.U.BP.62, is located in the street next to the North Square (pl. 20, plan 1). It is also decorated with two protruding bands, but here there is a groove above the top band, two grooves within the top band, no grooves in the gap, and two grooves on the bottom protruding band.

#### 2.2.2.4 Podia

The podia that held the two rows of columns, in the basilica the Central Church at Shivta, are a unique feature (SH.C.1.BP.17, SH.C.1.BP.18, SH.C.1.BP.19, SH.C.1.BP.20, SH.C.1.BP.21, SH.C.1.BP.22, SH.C.1.BP.23, SH.C.1.BP.24, SH.C.1.BP.25 and SH.C.1. BP.26) (pls. 21–30, plan 4).<sup>20</sup> The arrangement of the ten podia is as follows: two engaged in the western wall, six are located between the nave and the side aisle (three at each side), and two more are embedded in the first step of the *bema*. All of the podia were documented for comparative purposes. Although all of these architectural elements are in different states of preservation their study shows that they were all carved in chalk, and decorated in a similar manner. Each podium is constructed from two monolithic parts, the upper slightly smaller than the bottom. Out of the ten podia only four top halves have remained and are in various states of preservation.

The shape and decoration of the top and bottom halves is roughly the same and they were placed on each other in an inverted mode, so that the bottom is a reflection of the top. The bottom half of the podium has a shape of a cube at the top, which turns into a trapezoid towards the bottom, with a square base. The sides of the square base of the element are decorated in bas relief with three bands separated by grooves; a slightly convex band in between two fillets. A comparison between the measurements of decorations of the ten podia reveals that the differences between the heights of these various bands are only a few millimeters apart, indicating that they were all carved using the same technique. It is interesting to note

<sup>18</sup> A column drum with similar decoration is published in: Segal (1988), 122.

<sup>19</sup> A column drum with similar decoration is published in: Segal (1988), 123.

<sup>20</sup> For podia SH.C.1.BP.17 see Segal (1988), 93; for podia SH.C.1.BP.25 see Segal (1988), 92.

that the sides of the podia were finely dressed and the surfaces of the sides are smooth. This high level of craftsmanship and exactness of execution is not a common feature amongst the decorated architectural elements at Shivta.

### 2.2.3 Doorjambs

Doorjambs with three different types of compositions have been documented at Shiva. This group includes six doorjambs, four of which have been studied in situ. The various types of compositions include: "plain moldings", "ornate reliefs" and one doorjamb decorated with a series of wide deep grooves, which does not fit in the previous sub-categories and is in a *varia* category of its own.

## 2.2.3.1 Plain Moldings

Doorjamb segments with three different types of molding sequences were documented. Two segments (SH.V.1.DJ.11 and SH.V.1.DJ.12) are part of a pile of architectural elements in a dwelling, located southwest of the North Church, Another partial doorjamb (SH.R.1.DJ.6) is located in situ, at an entrance to a dwelling, in the eastern part of the Northern Quarter of the village (plans 1 and 6).

The original direction in which doorjambs SH.V.1.DJ.11 and SH.V.1.DJ.12 were placed cannot be determined. The decoration of doorjamb SH.V.1.DJ.11 is located off center (pl. 31); it starts 1.5cm from one edge of the rectangular ashlar on which it is carved, and ends slightly before its center. The decoration is composed of a sequence of vertical moldings in bas relief. The sequence is a fillet, a wider band that is triangular in section, a fillet, a convex band, and finally another fillet. It is likely that the side containing the moldings was nearer the entranceway than the part of the element that was void. The sequence of moldings of doorjamb SH.V.1.DJ.12 is more minimalistic and is carved roughly in the center of the rectangular ashlar

(pl. 32). The bas relief composition consists of a convex vertical band inbetween two vertical fillets.

The third doorjamb in this category, SH.R.1.DJ.6, consists of two doorjamb segments that are located in situ (pl. 33, plan 6). A third segment was noted in collapse just south of the entrance.<sup>21</sup> All segments are decorated with the same continuous composition. The part of the doorjamb that was preserved is comprised of a long rectangular ashlar. It was placed on its vertical axis on top of which there are two smaller rectangular ashlars. These were placed side by side to form the width of the jamb. The doorjamb is located on the right side of the entrance, and the decoration will be described from right to left, i.e. from the outer part of the architrave towards the entranceway. The sequence of vertical moldings is carved slightly off center.

<sup>21</sup> Segal (1988), 88.

It includes a flat and smooth band, a thinner convex band, a flat and smooth band and in the center of the sequence, a wide and slightly convex band. In the center of this band there is a very thin groove (0.05cm) that cuts the band in half vertically. This thin groove is likely to be a guideline marked by the artisan. The left side of the decoration to the left of the wide convex band follows the same sequence of a flat band, and is followed by a thinner convex band. The undecorated area left on the left side of the doorjamb is about 15.5cm wide.

The base of this doorjamb is also decorated. Since the style and quality is very similar to that of the rest of the doorjamb it will be described as part of it (pl. 33, plan 6). The base of the doorjamb is in the shape of a rectangular ashlar with a protruding trapezoidal facet. Although about a third of the base is covered by earth, the sequence of the moldings that ornamented the trapezoidal facet is largely visible. The decoration begins with a flat and smooth band, followed by a slightly protruding "fillet" band, a further protruding larger "fillet" and at the bottom, another further protruding "fillet" band. It is likely that the base and the architrave of the doorjamb were all decorated by the same artisan concurrently.

### 2.2.3.2 Ornate Reliefs

Doorjambs SH.P.1.DJ.4 and SH.P.1.DJ.5 are located at opposite sides of the same entrance, leading from the street into Room 1, at the southern part of the narthex of the South Church (pls. 34–35, plan 5). The decoration of these doorjambs continues on the bases they are placed upon. They are both ornamented with the same decorational composition. Although most of this entrance was not preserved it seems that each section of the doorjamb was made of two rectangular ashlars, placed side by side on their vertical axis. The two ashlars are not of the same width, and one is slightly narrower than the other. This renders the composition of the decoration slightly unsymmetrical. Although it is clear that the decorational composition of the entire entrance is the same, the northern doorjamb SH.P.1.DJ.4 and its base, are significantly more weathered.

The sequence of the reliefs, on both of the ashlars that are placed side by side to form the width of the architrave, is the same. The composition can be described from the outer side of the doorjamb towards the center as follows: A vertical band of three "star-like shapes in frames" that are carved one on top of the other. The contours of the arms of the "star-like shapes" are triangular in section, and the areas between them are hollowed-out. There is a wide vertical band that is slightly convex next to the "star-like shapes". It curves towards the center of the face of the doorjamb. A thinner convex band, slightly more depressed than the face of the element, is placed in the center of the composition. The meeting place of the two halves of the doorjamb marks the center of the band.

<sup>22</sup> Doorjamb SH.P.1.DJ.5 is published in: Segal (1988), 84.

Doorjamb base SH.P.1.BP.42 is located directly below SH.P.1.DJ.5 (pl. 36, plan 5).<sup>23</sup> It is relatively large and carved in a unique shape. This doorjamb is somewhat similar in shape to the podia from the Central Church (described above). The base comprises two monolithic parts, placed one behind the other. The front piece is in the shape of a trapezoid, with one right angle, and a rectangular-shaped bottom half. The front of the base is ornamented with the same decoration as the architrave of the doorjamb above it. In the center of the base there is a convex vertical band with a very thin groove along its center. This groove was probably engraved by the artisan as a guideline. On either side of the front face of the base there is a vertical band of "star-like shapes in frames". The "star-like shape" is achieved by overlapping a cross shape with an "X" shape. The carved lines that form the "star-like shapes" are triangular in section, producing a play of light and shadow. There are two "stars" in each of the vertical bands. The right side of the base is carved with a right angle. The left side has a 45 degree angle. Two small half "star-like shapes" in bas relief are placed in the space left in this area, between the vertical "star-like shapes" band and the edge of the base. At the bottom of the element there is a thick flat, smooth and upright band. It is highly likely that this base, and the doorjamb above it, were decorated by the same artisan.

#### 2.2.3.3 Varia

The final decorated doorjamb in this category of elements, SH.S.1.DJ.10, is a rectangular ashlar bearing a minimalistic composition, located in a dwelling in the western quarter of the site (pl. 37, plans 1 and 7). The entire structure of the doorjamb is composed of crudely cut and weathered rectangular ashlars that are placed on their vertical axis. Only four such ashlars are preserved of the entire structure of the entrance. Only one of these is decorated. It may be an indication that this architectural element is not located in its original location. The decoration of this element consists of three vertical, wide and concave grooves that are spaced along the front face of the ashlar. The distances between these grooves are not uniform. The simplicity and crudeness of workmanship of the decoration of this element is not inkeeping with the more elaborate decoration of the previously described doorjamb segments. It may reflect the work of a less accomplished craftsman.

#### 2.2.4 Lintels

Fifteen lintels were documented at Shivta; some out of their original context; several that were restored above various entrances at the site; and only one that is almost certainly located in its original location (SH.T.1.LT.37, pl. 38, plan 5).

<sup>23</sup> Segal (1988), 84.

The lintels were divided into four sub-categories according to the most dominant motif appearing in the composition of their decoration. There was no uniformity in the choice of raw material. Some of the lintels were carved in chalk while some in various types of limestone. The four sub-categories are: "crosses", "wheel-spoke rosettes and whirling wheels" and "petaled rosettes". A single lintel, which did not fit into any of the previously mentioned sub-categories, was labeled as "varia".

#### 2.2.4.1 Crosses

The following sub-category includes five lintels in which the cross is the most dominant motif in the ornamentation. The decoration of these lintels varies from simple compositions of a single cross to intricate ornamentation including a variety of motifs. The decoration of these architectural elements is described from the simplest compositions to the most elaborate.

Lintel SH.T.1.LT.37 is decorated with a sunken relief cross with straight arms (pl. 38, plan 5). The vertical arm is longer than the horizontal arm, which intersects it at its center. The vertical arm reaches the top and the bottom edges of the element. The lintel is situated above an entrance in a dwelling, located in a quarter, identified by Segal as the "Early Eastern Quarter". <sup>24</sup> The dwelling's location behind the Mosque, and the simplistic way in which the cross was carved, may lead to the suggestion that the decoration was carried out while the lintel was already in place. This was perhaps done by the residents of the dwelling, as a way to assert their Christianity in a settlement which now had a new Moslem population.

Lintel SH.N.2.LT.42 is also decorated with a minimalistic composition (pl. 39, **plan 3).**<sup>25</sup> This element is relatively long (approximately 170cm in width) and is carved in limestone. The lintel was restored above the entrance from the atrium to the nave in the North Church. The façade of the lintel is dotted by tool marks. It may indicate that there has been previous decoration on the lintel that may have been removed at some stage. The only decoration is engraved, roughly, in the center of the front face of the element. It includes a medallion inhabited by a Chi-Rho Christogram. The letter Chi is composed of a "Greek cross" (crux quadrata) with arms reaching the contour of the medallion. The arms are composed of two paralleling straight lines. The vertical arm appears complete, and the horizontal arm is engraved on either side of it. A free-hand engraving of a semi-circle, forming the Rho in the Christogram, is located adjacent to the top of the vertical arm of the cross, and to its right. It seems odd that such a minimally and simplistically decorated lintel would be placed above the main entrance to the basilica of the church, considering that there are other, far more richly decorated lintels, above other entrances in the church complex. This observation may lead to two suggestions. The first

<sup>24</sup> Segal (1983), 60, Fig. 17.

<sup>25</sup> Segal (1988), 35.

one is that this lintel may not have been restored to its original location. The other suggestion is that the decoration, currently adorning the lintel is not its original ornamentation. The first option seems more plausible.

Lintel SH.LT.24 is a fragmentary limestone lintel, currently located at the storerooms of the Israel Antiquities Authority (pl. 40).<sup>26</sup> The lintel is quite weathered and the only visible decoration on it is of an inhabited medallion. The frame of the medallion is composed of two concentric, slightly convex, bands and it is inhabited by a "Greek Cross". The contour of the cross is formed by slightly convex bands. Its arms are slightly flared at their ends. The four quarters, created by the cross within the medallion, are further decorated with bas reliefs. A depiction of a schematic grape cluster, in the form of a solid upside-down triangle, is depicted at the top left quarter. The individual grapes are defined by thin engravings, and from the top of the triangle or grape cluster, springs a tendril, depicted in. In the top right corner there is a relief of a small solid square. The bottom left and right quarters are inhabited by bas reliefs of the Greek letters alpha and omega. They are composed of flat bands. It is important to note that the alpha and the omega are inverted and placed with the alpha on the right and the omega on the left. This suggests that the craftsman decorating this architectural element may have been illiterate.

Lintel SH.N.2.LT.43 is restored above the entrance from the atrium to the north aisle in the North Church. It is placed to the right of the previously described lintel (pl. 43, plan 3).<sup>27</sup> The decoration is in the center of the element and is predominated by a medallion, inhabited by a "Greek cross", and additional motifs. The medallion is flanked on either side by palm branches. The decoration of this limestone lintel is carved in bas relief. The frame of the medallion is formed by several bands. The outer band is slightly convex and is followed by a band of square-shaped dentils, and another slightly convex band. The cross mimics the style of the frame of the medallion. Its arms are formed by straight bands of square-shaped dentils. The contour is further enhanced by a lightly convex band forming a "Greek cross" with slightly flared arms around the dentils. The arms of the cross nearly touch the inner frame of the medallion. A barely visible carving, of what may have been the Greek letter Rho, which combined with the cross as the letter Chi, may have formed a christogram, is found adjacent and to the right of the upper part of the vertical arm of the cross. Four quarters are formed by the cross within the medallion. These are decorated, respectively, at the bottom left and right quarters with a Greek alpha and omega. The symbols at the upper left and right quarter of the medallion are somewhat more ambiguous. A rectangle made of 42 dentil-like squares, six rows vertically and seven rows horizontally, is placed in the left upper quarter of the medallion. A flower-like motif, composed of a round depression in the center,

<sup>26</sup> Segal (1988), 52; cf. parallel to this lintel on p. 51.

<sup>27</sup> Segal (1988), 36.

encircled by stylized petals, is placed in the upper right quarter. The ornate medallion is flanked, on either side, by palm branches that are depicted in profile, and with their spine reclining towards the medallion. The leaves of the palm branches are elongated, hollowed-out ellipses. Each of the palm branches is set within a stand which was identified by Segal as a tripod.<sup>28</sup>

Lintel SH.F.2.LT.39 is carved of limestone, and is restored above the south façade entrance of the structure, identified as the "Governor's House" (pl. 42, plan 8).<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, the style of the decoration of this lintel is similar to the style of decoration of doorjamb capitals SH.P.CP.104 and SH.P.CP.105, previously described, and are located in the South Church (pls. 63–64, plan 5). It is possible that this lintel, and the two capitals, were decorated by the same craftsman or workshop. The ornamentation of lintel SH.F.2.LT.39 comprises two medallions, on either side of what may be a rounded bodied "vessel", with the body of the "vessel" decorated in the same fashion of an inhabited medallion. There are some remnants of red paint visible in the crevices of the carved decoration.

The lintel was broken in half, at some stage, where the central decoration was carved. It was restored with the use of concrete, in modern times. For this reason, some of the top and right side of this part of the lintel's decoration is damaged, and cannot be discerned. The preserved part of this center medallion, or round-shaped "vessel", is similar in composition to the decoration appearing on doorjamb capital SH.P.CP.105. The body of the "vessel" consists of a band, semi-circular in section, and is shaped as a circle. The base of the "vessel" is depicted as flared and concave at the bottom. It is hollowed-out, apart from a vertical band sectioning it, in its center. A motif that cannot be identified with certainty, but may have been the stem of a plant, is traced at the bottom of the vessel, on the left side of the base. It is likely that this part of the composition appears also in a symmetrical fashion on the right of the base. However this part of the decoration was not preserved. From what remains of the decoration, inside the "vessel", it seems that it was inhabited by a "Greek cross" with straight arms that are formed by a row of flat-topped bosses. Only the bottom left quarter, created by the cross, is preserved. It is further decorated by a downwards turning trefoil leaf with a stem that projects from the center of the cross. It is highly probable that the remaining, unpreserved, three quarters formed by the cross were also decorated, possibly, with similar trefoil leaves.

The workmanship of the two medallions on either side of the central motif appears to vary, although their design is distinctly similar.<sup>30</sup> The motifs of the medallion on the left are better defined. It may have been carved by a more skilled craftsman than the one who created the medallion on the right side of the composition.

<sup>28</sup> Segal (1988), 36.

<sup>29</sup> Segal (1988), 38.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Segal (1988), 38.

The medallion is composed of an ornate "bead-and-reel" band with elliptical beads, and rectangular reels. Each bas relief bead has an engraved concentric ellipse in its center. The medallion's inner space is completely populated by decoration. In its center is a carved, high relief "Greek cross" with flared, triangular arms. The area within the arms of the cross is deeply hollowed-out, into a sunken relief pyramidal shape. The four quarters, formed by the arms of the cross, are also decorated with four different types of leaves. In the upper left quarter there seems to be half a trefoil leaf, as only half of the space required to form a trefoil leaf, is decorated. It may be the result of a mistake made by the artisan. In the upper right quarter there is a trefoil leaf with elliptical lobes, which are slightly hollowed-out. In the bottom left quarter, the trefoil leaf has two solid pointed lobes, and a center lobe. This lobe is small, elliptical, and with a hollowed-out center. The fourth trefoil leaf, on the bottom right quarter, is composed of three solid pointed lobes.

The medallion on the right of the composition, aside from a few differences, is similar in composition to the medallion on the left. However it is different style and quality of execution. The "bead-and-reel" band, forming the medallion, is thicker, and only one of the beads, at the bottom left, exhibits an attempt at further decoration. This bead has a crude elliptical depression, carved out at its center. The cross, in the middle of the right medallion, is smaller than the cross in the left medallion. Its overall appearance is less exact. Four similar leaves, all solid with pointed lobes, are depicted in the quarters formed in between the arms of the cross. The leaves at the top are larger than the leaves at the bottom.

To sum up the description of lintel SH.F.2.LT.39, it could be proposed that two craftsmen, having different aptitudes, decorated this architectural element and that it was probably further decorated by paint. Perhaps the high location of the element above the entrance and the addition of the paint may have been enough to disguise the inconsistencies of the ornamentation in the eyes of this lintel's proprietors.

### 2.2.4.2 Wheel-Spoke Rosettes and Whirling Wheels

This sub-category of lintels includes four elements, one of which may be composed of two fragments that were documented next to one another in a pile of architectural elements. There are also lintels in various states of preservation that were carved in either chalk or limestone. These architectural elements were grouped together because in all of them the ornament of either a "wheel-spoke" rosette or, the similar motif, of a "whirling wheel", is featured in a prominent way.

The first lintel, SH.G.LT.16, is a fragment of a lintel that was used as *spolia* to form part of a step located in a street southwest of the Central Church (pl. 43, plans **1 and 9).** Only about a third of the original limestone lintel remains and it bears a medallion inhabited by a "wheel-spoke" rosette carved in bas relief. It is possible that the medallion was made with a compass, but the widths of the "spokes" of the rosette vary. The section of the "spokes" is in the shape of a scalene triangle with one leg considerably longer than the other; this creates a pleasing play of light and shadow. It could be suggested that for some reason, possibly due to some damage it may have incurred during the process of its ornamentation, it was decided not to use this stone as a lintel, and instead it was used as *spolia*.

Lintel SH.P.4.LT.1 was documented out of its original context, in collapse, in the chapel of the South Church. In Segal's publication, however, it appears restored over the entrance to the Monastery, from the north aisle of the South Church (pl. 44).31 Currently (January of 2014) this lintel has been restored above the entrance leading from the narthex to the nave of the South Church, As the lintel was documented out of situ, and since it was twice restored in modern times, it is impossible to determine the right-side-up of this element. The lintel is carved of a monolithic segment of limestone. It is full of fossils and is somewhat weathered. The composition of the decoration includes three medallions taking-up, nearly, the entire front face of the element. The center medallion is inhabited with a compassmade, bas relief "Greek cross", with flared arms. The frame of the medallion is comprised of two engraved concentric circles. Between them are engraved diagonal lines forming a "rope pattern". The guidelines, used to carve the "Greek cross", overlap the frame of the band. There seems to have been no attempts made to remove, or disguise them. The two medallions flanking the central medallion are decorated in a similar fashion. The medallion is carved as a sunken relief disk inhabited by a bas relief, "wheel-spoke" rosette. In both of the medallions the "spokes" of the rosettes spring from a flat disk, in the center of the medallion. These "wheel-spoke" rosettes are carved in the same manner as the one appearing on the previously described lintel SH.G.LT.16. The "spokes" vary in width and are carved in the shape of a scalene triangle with one leg longer than the other. The overall workmanship of the lintel is relatively simplistic, in comparison to other decorated lintels, found at the site.

The "whirling wheel" is, in some respects, a similar ornament to the "wheel-spoke" rosette, and therefore, appears in the same sub-category. This motif is also circular and appears inside a medallion. But, as opposed to the straight "spokes" of the "wheel-spoke" rosette, the radiating lines, forming the ornament, are curved giving it an appearance similar to that of a two-dimensional whirling wheel, or pin-wheel. Two lintels in this sub-category are adorned with "whirling wheel" ornaments. It forms a main part in their decorational composition.

The first lintel is comprised of two limestone fragments (SH.Q.1.LT.32 and SH.Q.1.LT.33), located in collapse, one next to the other, as part of a collection of architectural elements. They are placed in the courtyard of a building located southeast of the North Church (pls. 45–46, plan 1).<sup>32</sup> The face of the lintel is

<sup>31</sup> Segal (1988), 26.

<sup>32</sup> For the identification of the monastery see: Segal (1983), 15.

weathered and covered by patina, yet, the decoration is still visible. The composition includes three engraved medallions. The left and right medallions are complete, and the center medallion is cut roughly in half, where the lintel is broken into two parts. The three medallions are inhabited by stylized "whirling wheels". The medallions appeared to have been engraved with the use of a compass and the diameters of the complete right and left medallions are nearly the same.<sup>33</sup> The lines that form the "whirling wheel" are, however, engraved in an inaccurate fashion, clearly by freehand. These lines spring from a small concentric circle engraved in the center of the medallion. This lintel appears to have been decorated by an untrained layman or a novice craftsman.

The quality of the decoration of lintel SH.N.2.LT.41 stands in contrast to the inexactness of the ornamentation of the previously discussed element (pl. 47, plan 3).<sup>34</sup> This lintel is carved in chalk, and is restored in its current location, above the entrance from the atrium, to the south aisle of the North Church. The composition of this lintel also includes three bas relief medallions. The center one featuring a cross, and the left and right medallions are inhabited by "whirling wheel" rosettes. There are bas reliefs of birds above the composition. Uniquely, all of the medallions are of different sizes. The largest one is on the left, and the smallest is on the right. The central medallion consists of two adjacent bands that are semi-circular in section, and inhabited by a "Greek cross". The cross is composed of two paralleling lines, set three centimeters apart. The lines that form the arm of the cross intersect in the center and the arms reach the edge of the inner frame of the medallion. This medallion is set within a frame composed of an interlaced square and rhombus. The contour of the medallion, on the left of the composition, is made of a semi-circular band. It is inhabited by a "whirling wheel" rosette whose "spokes" are carved, in bas relief. There may have been a boss in the center of this medallion, but that section of the decoration has been damaged. The medallion on the right is similar to the medallion on the left. This medallion is smaller and is set within a hexagonal polygon with concave sides.

Three birds carved, in bas relief, are depicted above the composition of the three medallions. Two of the birds appear above the right "whirling wheel" medallion, and one between the center and left medallions. It is highly probable that there were two birds, carved on the left side of the lintel, and not one. Yet, since the lintel is damaged in that area, the fourth bird is not visible. The birds are depicted in profile, facing the center of the lintel. They are carved in a naturalized fashion with tail feathers marked by deep engraved lines carved in free-hand. These birds may be partridges or pigeons, both of which were common at the Shivta, during this period.

<sup>33</sup> The diameters of the two medallions are approximately 27cm and 28.6cm respectively.

<sup>34</sup> Segal (1988), 34.

## 2.2.4.3 Rosettes with Petals

There are four fragmentary lintels belonging to this sub-category. Two are carved in chalk, one in chalky-limestone, and one in limestone. The first and most simplistically decorated lintel, SH.LT.7, is carved in chalk (pl. 48).<sup>35</sup> The original location of this artifact is unknown. It was documented by Segal as one of the architectural elements that were collected in a pile, in the yard of the Colt Expedition House. This is the most fragmentary of all of the lintels in this category, and it seems that only about a third of it was preserved. The main part of the decoration, which appears in the center of the fragment, is an engraved compass-made medallion inhabited by a four-petaled rosette, carved in sunken relief. The petals are lozenge-shaped with their ends truncated by the groove of the contour of the medallion. They are leaflike in their appearance with the veins of the leaves engraved in a "fishbone pattern". There are some remnants of red paint in the grooves of the veins. There is a framing band with an engraving of a schematized "rope pattern", either at the top, or the bottom of the lintel (the directionality of the lintel cannot be determined). Additional remnants of thin grooves appear near the bottom, and the narrower side of the lintel, but no engraved decoration can be discerned.

Lintel SH.LT.28, similar to the previously described element, is carved in soft chalk, and is likewise fragmentary; only two-thirds of this lintel are preserved (pl. 49).<sup>36</sup> The stone of which the lintel was hewn contains many fossils that punctuate the decorated face of the element, and cause it to appear somewhat "pot marked". It is most likely that the original decoration of the lintel consisted of three inhabited medallions, but of the original composition only two remain. Unfortunately, as the item is not located in situ, it is impossible to determine whether the medallion, nearer the edge of the stone, was on the left or the right side of the composition. Therefore, the decoration will be described as it appears on the photograph taken by the Israel Antiquities Authority photographer, and also appears here as a figure. The medallion on the left is composed of a compass-made thin groove in which a four-petaled rosette is engraved. The petals are in the shape of lozenges with their outer edges truncated by the contour of the medallion. Each of the petals bears an engraving, in their center, of a thin needle-like shape. A round boss, in sunken relief, is depicted in the center of the rosette. Two concentric thin lozenges imitating the shape of the petals of the rosette are engraved around the inner circumference of the medallion. The center medallion is also composed of a thin compass-made circular groove. This medallion contains two thinly engraved concentric circles, which are considerably smaller than the contour of the medallion. The center concentric circle is composed of a thin groove while the inner most circle is formed of a band of particularly small "zigzag pattern", in sunken relief. There is an engraving

<sup>35</sup> Segal (1988), 136.

<sup>36</sup> Segal (1988), 43.

of a five pointed shape with slightly concave sides in the space between the outer circle that forms the outline of the medallion, and the center concentric circle.

The third lintel in this sub-group of architectural elements, SH.N.1.LT.36, is carved in chalky-limestone (pl. 50, plan 3).<sup>37</sup> The design of the decoration is more elaborate than the two previously described elements and it could be suggested that this lintel was carved by a different artisan. Only two-thirds of the lintel was preserved. The original composition of the decoration included three inhabited medallions with an engrave scroll intertwined around them, in a wavy line. The medallion nearer the left edge of the lintel is inhabited with a compass-made sixpetaled rosette. The petals of the rosette are in the shape of triangles with flared sides. The apexes of the triangles converge at the center of the rosette. In the center of each triangle there is a bas relief, flat, round boss. The area between the bosses and the edges of the triangles is hollowed-out. The triangle-shaped petals of the rosette are carved in high relief and the areas between them and the contour of the medallion are hollowed-out. The center medallion is decorated with a cross and rosette decoration. The arms of the cross are composed of four flared triangles with the same design as the triangles that form the petals of the previously described rosette. The lozenge-shaped areas between the edges of the arms of the cross and the contour of the medallion are hollowed-out. The areas between the four arms of the cross are decorated with four petal-shapes that form a rosette. The petals are truncated lozenges and are carved in bas relief. They are decorated with a vertical line in their center and a groove that follows the contour of the shape of the petal. The scroll that intertwines between the medallions and the leaves that are coming out of it is composed of thin engraved grooves. On either side of each medallion there are two volute shaped leaves and between them two stylized lotus-shaped flowers, engraved on either side of the scroll.

The last lintel in this sub-category, SH.P.6.LT.5, is carved in limestone and was documented out of situ (pl. 51).<sup>38</sup> The photograph of this element in Segal's publication shows the lintel in a nearly complete state of preservation; since this publication it has been broken in half and only its left half was available for reevaluation during the course of this study.<sup>39</sup> The composition of the ornamentation includes three medallions. The one in the center is inhabited by a cross and the left and right medallions were populated by two different types of rosettes. The spaces between the medallions are filled with decorations of vine scrolls and grape clusters in

<sup>37</sup> Segal (1988), 37; in this publication the lintel appears restored in the North Church above the entrance to the atrium from the north. The full width of the lintel is preserved, but the right part appears to be greatly damaged and only traces of the third medallion are visible.

<sup>38</sup> This lintel has been previously reconstructed in the South Church above the entrance from the narthex to the nave.

<sup>39</sup> Segal (1988), 29.

*horror vacui* fashion. The left half of the lintel was documented and will be described subsequently.<sup>40</sup>

The vine scroll is composed of a single bas relief band that is semi-circular in section and forms inhabited medallions. It is interesting to note that this is a composition common in many mosaic pavements during this period. The frames of the medallions consist of a succession of bas relief bands. The outer one is the vine scroll, followed by: a band of square dentils, two parallel bands that are semicircular in section, a band of square dentils and a semi-circular band. The left medallion is inhabited by an engraved six-petaled rosette. The grooves forming the outline of the rosette are deep and thick and the petals are narrow and somewhat needle-shaped. In the center of each of the petals there is a vertical groove dividing the petal in half. Following the contour of the medallion between the petals of the rosette there are engravings of shapes similar to the petals of the rosette. The center medallion is currently broken in half, but most of the decoration can be seen in the photograph published by Segal. 41 This medallion is inhabited by a simplified cross. The arms of the cross are composed of two paralleling semi-circular bands that do not intersect in the center of the cross. This divides the medallion into four quarters that are further inhabited. In the upper left quarter there is a round boss. The decoration of the upper right quarter was not preserved. In the bottom two quarters there is a bas relief of a Greek alpha (A) and a badly damaged omega ( $\omega$ ). The 'A' is on the left and the ' $\omega$ ' is on the right. The contour of the letters is composed of two paralleling semi-circular bands.

At the upper left corner of the lintel there is a stylized depiction of a grape cluster composed as an upside-down triangle. The grapes are defined as small square shapes carved in bas relief with deep grooves between them. A similar cluster of grapes, attached to the vine, also appears between the left and center medallions towards the bottom of the lintel. On the left, between two grape clusters there are bas relief carvings of trefoil leaves. The leaves are oblong in shape and hollowed-out.

## 2.2.4.4 Varia

The composition of the decoration of lintel SH.P.LT.38 could not be classified to any of the previously defined categories (**pl. 52, plan 5**). The lintel is currently reconstructed over the entrance leading from the narthex of the South Church to the north aisle. An archive photograph published by Segal clearly shows that previously the

was badly damaged and only some of the decoration in this area is visible.

**<sup>40</sup>** According to Segal (1988), 29: "The Right Medallion: Its frame is like that of the middle medallion. The medallion's interior is decorated by a "whirling wheel" rosette with a boss at its center." **41** Segal (1988), 29. In the photograph it appears that the bottom right quarter of the medallion

element was discovered elsewhere in collapse. 42 The style of the decoration of the lintel is quite unique. The ornamentation appears on a protruding rectangular facet that takes up most of the front face of the element. The recessed frame around the protruding facet is decorated with a thin, engraved wavy band. This engraved band does not appear at the bottom of the recessed frame. The decoration within the protruding rectangular facet is further framed by two adjacent convex bands. The main composition of the decoration consists of three solid, bas relief, compass-made medallions flanked by stylized depictions of "arcades". Between the medallions stylized vine scrolls and grape clusters are carved in bas relief. There are very few remnants of red paint in various spots on the front face of the lintel.

Currently the element is quite weathered and therefore many parts of the decoration are no longer visible; although the archive photograph presented by Segal does show the lintel in a slightly better state of preservation, the light that it sheds is quite dim. Nevertheless, the following is a description of all the visible components of the decoration. It is likely that all three of the solid medallions were inhabited but the only one which bears remnants of the original decoration is the center medallion. Here the extremities of the left and bottom arms of an ornate cross, which was carved in bas relief, are visible. The arms are composed of two adjacent convex bands that are flanked at the ends by a boss on either side. The vine scrolls "grow" from bulb-like shapes composed of a solid circular bas relief motif with a concentric circle engraved within its circumference. These "bulbs" are located between the medallions and on either side of this section of the composition. The vine scrolls start upwards from the bulbs and are carved in the shape of slightly convex bands. Stylized grape bunches appear in-between either side of each medallion. The grape bunches are carved as drop-shapes with their face covered by an engraved net-pattern.

On either side of the medallions that form the main part of the composition, there are two adjacent, convex, vertical bands that separate this part of the composition from the stylized "arcades" that flank it on either side. Both "arcades" are composed of an arch supported by two cylindrical columns with rectangular bases and trapezoidal capitals. Each of the columns bears not just the full arch, but also what seems to be the beginning of an additional arch giving the sense that the "arcade" continues to the left and right of this part of the composition. The rectangular bases on which the columns stand bear an engraving of a concentric rectangle that follows the contour of the base on the inside. It is possible that there was further decoration within both of the full arches, but the face of the lintel is too damaged to allow a speculation as to what that decoration may have been.<sup>43</sup>

**<sup>42</sup>** Segal (1988), 30–31.

<sup>43</sup> Segal suggests that: "In the spaces between the columns and beneath the arches figures, perhaps of people, had been incised. Of the image in the left space nothing remains. In the right space we believe we can make out a man's feet in bas relief. It may be that the figures were deliberately

An additional lintel that could not be classified on the basis of its decoration in any of the other stylistic sub-categories is lintel SH.N.LT.40 **(pl. 53, plan 3)**. <sup>44</sup> This element is composed of three different sections that were put together during the 1930's by the Colt Expedition and restored over the south entrance to the North Church complex. The center section of the lintel is carved of chalk while the left and right sections are carved of limestone. As the restoration of this lintel is not documented, one possibility that is suggested by Segal is that:

"...the restoration was based upon an original section whose deterioration precluded its replacement."  $^{45}$ 

On the basis of stylistic likeness, an additional suggestion could be made that the middle section was taken from another lintel discovered in the church complex and that the left and right sections of the restored lintel are perhaps part of the same lintel. The style of the decoration of the middle section of the lintel is somewhat similar to that of lintel SH.N.2.LT.43 (pl. 41, plan 3), located above the main entrance from the atrium to the basilica of the North Church. The left and right sections of lintel SH.N.LT.40 are similar to one another in the style of their ornamentation, but are decorated in a completely different style than the center section. The possibility may exist that the left and right sections of the lintel were decorated by a different artisan than the middle section.

The middle section of the lintel is shaped as an upside-down regular trapezoid and the entire face of this part of the lintel is covered with horizontal carving-tool marks. The decoration is carved in bas relief and consists of an inhabited medallion. The center of the ornament seems to have incurred some intentional damage as the rest of this section of the lintel is preserved in near perfect condition. Notwithstanding the damaged area, the composition of the inhabited medallion is still clearly visible. The contour of the medallion is composed of a band that is relatively wide (1.9cm) and is rectangular in section. The arms of the "Greek cross" are flush with the band forming the contour of the medallion and so forms a single unified motif with the medallion. Thin diagonal bands stem out of the ends of the arms of the cross, on either side of each arm. Adjacent to the top part of the vertical arm of the cross there is a carving of what appears to be the Greek letter *rho*. This motif, together with the cross, forms the common *Chi-Rho* Christogram. Adjacent to the center of the cross, at the corners of the quadrats formed by the arms of the cross

destroyed." Segal (1988), 30. Today the poor state of preservation does not allow for any such speculation to be made.

<sup>44</sup> Segal (1988), 33.

<sup>45</sup> Segal (1988), 33.

there are four flat bosses. 46 The four quadrats are further inhabited; the bottom two, contain the Greek alpha and omega, in the left and right quadrats respectively. The upper left quadrats are inhabited with a small round rosette-like motif composed of a boss with a concentric circle engraved in its center. In the outer circle there are incised lines, which give this ornament a flower-like appearance.

The left section of the lintel seems, like the other parts of the lintel, to have been cut to fit this amalgam and is therefore in the shape of an irregular polygon. The decoration appears in the center as a shallow relief inhabited medallion. The contour of the medallion is formed by an incised "rope pattern" band. The medallion is inhabited by a compass-made six petaled rosette. The petals of the rosette are thin, elongated and pointed. In the center of each petal there is a wide depression that follows the contour of the petal, giving the rosette a more threedimensional appearance. Between each of the petals of the rosette and following the contour of the medallion there are motifs that mimic the shape of the rosette petals.

The right section of the lintel is also shaped as an irregular polygon and is decorated in a very similar style to the left section of the lintel. In the center of the composition there is a rosette similar to the rosette previously described, including the petal-like motifs that follow the contour of the medallion. The only difference is that here the petal-like motifs form the medallion in which the rosette is set. This composition is further framed by a bas relief design of a square overlapped by a rhombus. As opposed to the center piece of the lintel the tool marks on the face of the left and right sections are not all horizontal, but are shorter and appear in different directions. This may be a further indication that these parts of the lintel were decorated by a different hand than the one that was responsible for the decoration of the middle section of the lintel.

### 2.2.5 Capitals

The functional group of capitals is divided into sub-categories in a similar manner to the previous group of bases and podia. Two different types of capitals are represented in this group: doorjamb capitals and column capitals. As in the case of the doorjamb bases, the nature and variety of the decorations dictated that the doorjamb capitals be divided into three general sub-categories. These categories are: "minimalistic relief compositions", "complex relief compositions" and "engraved compositions". The cylindrical column capitals form their own sub-category.

<sup>46</sup> The bosses in the corners of the bottom quadrats are clearly visible, while the two bosses at the upper quadrats were greatly damaged and only fragments of the boss in the upper right quadrat is visible.

## 2.2.5.1 Minimalistic Relief Compositions

Three doorjamb capitals decorated with a simple composition of reliefs have been documented. Two (SH.F.1.CP.36 and SH.F.1.CP.37) are located on opposite sides of the same entrance in the "Governor's House"<sup>47</sup> and one (SH.H.1.CP.42) located in a dwelling in the west-central quarter of the site (**plan 1**). Capitals SH.F.1.CP.36 and SH.F.1.CP.37 are carved in chalk and their protruding trapezoidal facets are decorated on both sides with a continuous design (**pls. 54–55, plan 8**).<sup>48</sup> At the top, the element is decorated with a flat and upright band, below this band the face of the trapezoidal facet begins to slope inwardly. At the bottom, the capital is decorated with a slightly depressed band of bas relief elongated dentils. The trapezoidal facet is slightly shorter than the height of the rectangular ashlar that forms the doorjamb capital.

Capital SH.H.1.CP.42, located in a dwelling in the west-central quarter, is carved of limey-chalk and is uniquely decorated with two slightly different designs on either of its protruding trapezoidal facets (pl. 56, plan 9).<sup>49</sup> On the front of the capital the decoration starts with a flat and smooth band that slopes outwardly and below it the face of the trapezoidal facet slopes inwardly and is very slightly concave. At the bottom this trapezoidal facet is decorated with a depressed band of a relatively thin "zigzag pattern" and below a sunk fillet band. On the depth side of the capital the trapezoidal facet is decorated at the bottom with two thin graded sunk fillet bands. This capital is finely hewn and dressed and seems to have been decorated by an experienced artisan.

#### 2.2.5.2 Complex Relief Compositions

A relatively large portion of the assemblage of doorjamb capitals from Shivta includes architectural elements with complex compositions of relief moldings and ornaments. The decoration of these doorjamb capitals are varied in style and workmanship and it could be suggested that they were carved by several different artisans. The provenance of the capitals is from a variety of locations at the site and although six of the ten elements are seemingly *in situ*, four may have been restored in their current location by the Colt Expedition, a restoration for which there is no documentation.

Capital SH.CP.16 is a doorjamb capital with two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets

**<sup>47</sup>** Doorjamb capitals SH.F.1.CP.36 and SH.F.1.CP.37 are located at the entrance leading from the courtyard to Room 1 in the "Governor's House". The name "Governor's House" appears in Segal (1983), 151–174. The room number is my own and appears on plan 8.

<sup>48</sup> For doorjamb capital SH.F.1.CP.37 see Segal (1988), 65.

**<sup>49</sup>** Segal (1988), 67. Doorjamb capital SH.H.1.CP.42 is located at the entrance from the courtyard to Room 1 (plan 9). This dwelling was also used by the Colt Expedition.

(pl. 57). 50 The narrower side of the capital is very weathered and the decoration is only visible enough to discern that it is similar to the decoration on the front side of the element. The front trapezoidal facet is decorated with a flat, smooth, and upright band under which the face of the trapezoidal facet slopes inwardly. This band is followed by a succession of bands: a concave band in sunken relief, a fillet molding, a "rope pattern" band, a very thin semi-circular band and a "bead-and-reel" band. The "beads" are elliptical and hollowed-out and are alternating with cylindrical "reels". The trapezoidal facet is shorter than the height of the rectangular ashlar and ends 2.5cm before the bottom edge of the element.

The next three doorjamb capitals to be described all bear the decoration of "star-like shapes in frames" as a dominant part of the composition. The first, SH. CP.85, is carved in the shape of a rectangular ashlar with a protruding trapezoidal facet in its center (pl. 58). The decoration at the top of the trapezoidal facet consists of a bas relief fillet. Below this molding most of the area is left undecorated and at the bottom of the capital there is a decoration of a bas relief band of five "star-like shapes in frames" bordered at the top and bottom by deep grooves that are triangular in section. The size of the "star-like shapes" is not uniform suggesting that the artisan did not preplan the layout of the decoration before starting the carving process.

Capitals SH.F.2.CP.43 and SH.F.2.CP.44 are located in situ at the entrance opposite the piazza in front of the southeastern corner of the "Governor's House" (plan 8). The western capital of the two, SH.F.2.CP.43, is decorated with a sequence of relief bands and moldings starting with a fillet molding below which the face of the trapezoidal facet slopes inwardly (pl. 59).<sup>51</sup> This is followed by a band of "star-like shapes in frames". The carved lines that form the "stars" are thin and the areas around them are deeply hollowed-out. This band is defined at the top and bottom by deep grooves. Next there is molding of a 2.5cm thick semi-circular band followed by a deep groove. The next relief band is of a unique composition of solid rhomboids in square frames. The areas between the rhomboids and the square frames are deeply hollowed-out.<sup>52</sup> At the bottom the protruding trapezoidal facet is decorated with a semi-circular band and a fillet molding, in bas relief.

Capital SH.F.2.CP.44 is on the eastern side of the same entrance as the previously described capital (pl. 60).<sup>53</sup> The style of the decoration is similar and both of these capitals have been carved from the same type of chalk stone. The decoration begins with a fillet molding, below which the face of the trapezoidal facet begins to

<sup>50</sup> Segal (1988), 71.

<sup>51</sup> Segal (1988), 63. The top right corner of the trapezoidal facet seems to have been removed with a mechanical tool.

<sup>52</sup> Interestingly, similar solid rhomboids are carved on previously described arch segment SH.D.1. AR.4.

<sup>53</sup> Segal (1988), 64.

slope inwardly. The main part of the facet is decorated with two rows of "star-like shapes in frames". The top row contains four "stars" flanked by a half "star" on either side, and the bottom row contains three "stars" that are also flanked by half a "star" on either side. The lines forming the arms of the "stars" are thin and the area between them and the square frames is deeply hollowed-out. The two rows of "star-like shapes in frames" are bordered at top by a deep groove and below by a succession of three sunk fillets.

An additional pair of doorjamb capitals, SH.P.CP.99 and SH.P.CP.100, is located on either side of the entrance leading from the narthex of the South Church to the nave (plan 5). These two capitals are decorated with a nearly identical composition. Interestingly the protruding trapezoidal facet of each capital is ornamented with a continuous decoration, not only on the front and depth sides of the trapezoidal facet, but also on the very narrow side left on the right and left of each capital respectively. Capital SH.P.CP.99 is the southern one of the two (pl. 61).<sup>54</sup> The front and depth sides of the capital are decorated with the same composition of schematic leaves. There is one whole leaf in the center, in the shape of a vertical lozenge, and a half leaf at either side of the face of the element. The outlines of the leaves are marked by a semi-circular band and the veins are created by engraved diagonal lines. The whole leaf in the center is on top of a solid triangle, giving the leaf the shape of a schematic fish. At the top the capital is decorated with a flat and upright band that is followed by a bas relief, semi-circular band. At the bottom of the capital the decoration consists of a band of bas relief "zigzag pattern". The triangles that make up this pattern are upside-down. On the narrowest side of the protruding trapezoidal facet the decoration consists only of a half leaf. The decoration of the northern capital of this entrance, SH.P.CP.100, is the same with the exception that at the top there are two, not one, semi-circular bands (pl. 62).<sup>55</sup>

Although doorjamb capitals SH.P.CP.104 and SH.P.CP.105 are locate at the adjacent entrance<sup>56</sup> to the previously described capitals the style of their decoration is completely different and much more elaborate **(plan 5)**. They were clearly carved by a different hand. The style of the composition of capitals SH.P.CP.104 and SH.P. CP.105 is very similar and full of details in a *horror vacui* fashion. Only the front of the protruding trapezoidal facet is decorated.

Capital SH.P.CP.104 is decorated at top with a band of four "star-like shapes in frames" **(pl. 63).**<sup>57</sup> The lines that form the "stars" are thin and triangular in section and the areas between them and the square frames are deeply hollowed-out. Below this band, the main part of the trapezoidal facet is decorated with an inhabited medallion that is flanked by a "*fleur-de-lis-*like" trefoil flower with hollowed-out petals.

<sup>54</sup> Segal (1988), 55.

<sup>55</sup> Similar to the previous element published in: Segal (1988), 55.

**<sup>56</sup>** The entrance leading from the narthex to the northern side aisle of the South Church.

<sup>57</sup> Segal (1988), 57.

These trefoil flowers are further flanked by palmettes with drop-shaped, concave leaves that are carved in high relief. The overall shape of the palmettes is crescent like. The medallion in the center of the composition is made of a "beads-and-reels" pattern with double cylindrical "reels" alternating with elongated, hollowed-out, lozenge shaped "beads". The medallion is inhabited by a carving of a "Greek cross" with flared arms. The arms of the cross are hollowed-out and in each one there is a thin line, in bas relief, along the length of the arm; below the horizontal arm of the cross, on either side of the vertical arm, there are downwards hanging concave trefoil leaves. Still within the medallion, and below the "Greek cross", there is a depiction of another medallion which is a miniaturized version of the outer "beads-andreels" medallion.

Doorjamb capital SH.P.CP.105 is the capital of the north side of the same entrance as the previously described capital (pl. 64).58 The composition of the decoration is the same with some exceptions. In the center of the composition, instead of a medallion there is a round-bodied vessel. The neck and base of this vessel are flared and two small "ear-handles" are carved on its shoulders. The round body of the jar serves as an inhabited medallion, and in it there is a large "Greek cross". The arms of the cross are in the shape of elongated elliptical petals. These petals are hollowed-out, and in their center, along their length, there is a carved bas relief line. In the quarters between the arms of the cross the space is filled with smaller, elongated, elliptical petals that are hollowed-out. The other difference between the decoration of this capital and the previous one is that the "fleur-de-lis" like flowers on either side of the round bodied vessel appear facing upwards towards the top of the composition and facing downwards towards the bottom of the composition.

An additional doorjamb capital with a similar style of decoration is currently located in a pile of architectural elements north of the Central Church (plan 1). Doorjamb capital SH.D.1.CP.120 is more weathered than the two previously described capitals (pl. 65). At the top of the protruding trapezoidal facet there is a band of bas relief "star-like shapes in frames". This band is narrower than the one appearing on capitals SH.P.CP.104 and SH.P.CP.105 and contains more "stars" in frames. The main decoration consists of a round bodied vessel, similar to the one on capital SH.P.PCP.105. With the same "floral cross" decoration inhabiting the medallion formed by the round body of the vessel. From either side of the bottom of the neck of the vessel come out downwards-bent bands of bosses that end at the bottom of the trapezoidal facet with small "Greek crosses". These crosses have hollowed-out flared arms. There seem to be additional "vine scroll"-like bands that reach out from the boss-formed bands at the top of the composition and also from the base of the vessel. These "vine scrolls" may end in trefoil leaves, but this part of the decoration is too weathered to be described with any certainty.

<sup>58</sup> Segal (1988), 56.

The original location of the last doorjamb capital (SH.CP.47) that belongs to this category is unknown (**pl. 66**).<sup>59</sup> The decoration that appears on it is dissimilar to any other element found at the site. The right side of the trapezoidal facet is not preserved, but the scheme of the decoration is discernible. The main part of the trapezoidal facet is dominated by an octagonal medallion inhabited in its center by three hollowed-out vertical lozenge shapes. The eight sides of the medallion are also composed of similar hollowed-out lozenges. The medallion is flanked on its left side by another vertical hollowed-out lozenge. The protruding trapezoidal facet is shorter at its bottom than the total height of the capital.

## 2.2.5.3 Engraved Composition

Seven doorjamb capitals that bear engravings as the main part of their decoration (as opposed to moldings and reliefs) have been studied. The first three items in this group (SH.CP.1, SH.CP.31 and SH.M.CP.98) were all studied out of their original context, which is unknown. These capitals are decorated by a composition of deep engravings that appear to have been carved by free-hand. The lines that make the compositions are not always straight and the workmanship seems to be that of a novice.

Capital SH.CP.1 has a protruding trapezoidal facet that is decorated only on its front side with four registers that are defined by horizontal grooves (**pl. 67**).<sup>60</sup> The top and bottom registers are inhabited by a band of "zigzag pattern". In the center of the capital there are two bands of "star-like shapes in frames". Doorjamb capital SH.CP.31 is decorated in an even cruder fashion than the previously described element on both sides of its protruding trapezoidal facet (**pl. 68**).<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that at the top of the capital there is a slightly rounded band that is defined at the bottom with a deep groove that is triangular in section. Below this band there is a band of bas relief "zigzag pattern" composed of small upside-down triangles. The workmanship of this part of the decoration is not in-keeping with the style and workmanship that appears on the engraved band above it. This is an engraved band of "zigzag pattern". The "triangles" that make up this band are engraved by free-hand and at times their lines intersect. It seems plausible that two different persons worked on this architectural element and that one was more accomplished than the other.

**<sup>59</sup>** Segal (1988), 91. Although Segal classifies this element as a pilaster base it could also be a doorjamb capital. The photo of the element in Segal's publication shows the element in a much better preservation state than it currently has. The fillet at the top of the trapezoidal facet is visible and it is possible that it was decorated with a pattern of "beads-and-reels". There are three concave, cylindrical "reels" alternating with a lozenge-shaped hollowed-out "bead".

<sup>60</sup> Segal (1988), 72.

<sup>61</sup> Segal (1988), 69.

The third doorjamb capital in this sub-category, SH.M.CP.98, also exhibits two different levels of execution that may hint at work performed by two different individuals (pl. 69). 62 This capital is decorated on both sides of its protruding trapezoidal facet. At the top and the bottom of the capital the decoration consists of two upright and smooth bands defined at the bottom and the top by a thin horizontal groove. The entire area between these two bands is covered by diagonal grooves that form a "net pattern". In several places on both faces of the trapezoidal facet there are remnants of red paint. Interestingly the diagonal lines that form the "net pattern" on the front face of the element are crooked and do not maintain an equal distance between them; while on the depth side of the trapezoidal facet the "net pattern" is formed by straight lines that are relatively equidistant.

Doorjamb capitals SH.CP.18 and SH.CP.51 are engraved with slightly more complex designs than the two previously described capitals. The original location of both of these capitals is unknown. The first, capital SH.CP.18, is ornamented on both sides of its trapezoidal facet with an identical engraved decoration of two half palmettes that flank an upside-down engraved triangle (pl. 70). 63 The palmettes are engraved in a schematic manner, their top parts are truncated, the leaves of the palmettes are marked by downwards turned diagonal lines, and the outlines of each palmette is defined by a band of schematic dentils. At the bottom of the trapezoidal facet there is a row of bas relief "zigzag pattern". The upside-down triangles that make-up the "zigzag pattern" are relatively small. Although the style of the decoration of this element is quite schematic it exhibits more preplanning and more precision than the style of the previously described capitals.

The decoration of doorjamb capital SH.CP.51 is also somewhat schematic, but the engraved composition is more intricate than on the previously discussed architectural elements in this category (pl. 71).<sup>64</sup> This capital is decorated only on its front side, on the protruding trapezoidal facet. Since the state of preservation of this element is not very good it is difficult to discern the decoration of the top part of the trapezoidal facet, but it is possible that the top half of the composition included a series of graded fillets. Just above the center of the trapezoidal facet there is a thin horizontal groove and below an engraved schematic composition depicting a series of arches. There are three full arches in the center flanked by a half arch on either side. This series of arches is more visible in earlier publications of the capital from the time it was in a better preservation state; currently the half arch on the right is no longer visible. 65 The cylindrical columns between the arches seem to bear capitals composed of two thin rectangles, one on top of the other. The arches above the columns are carved as two concentric semi-circles. A horizontal "rod"

<sup>62</sup> Segal (1988), 85.

<sup>63</sup> Segal (1988), 68.

<sup>64</sup> Segal (1988), 75.

<sup>65</sup> Wiegand (1920), 80; Avi-Yonah (1981), 42, Fig. 13.

appears in between the two columns below each of the full arches and a schematic depiction of a gathered up curtain hangs from it. Above the curtain in the left and right full arches there is an engraving of a cross and in the center arch there is a "net pattern" that fills the upper part of the area above the horizontal "rod". Segal's interpretation that this scene is of the interior space of a three apsidal church seems quite plausible. This type of decoration depicting an architectural structure, rather than a geometric or a floral design is very rare on the architectural elements of the Byzantine Negev.

The last two capitals that belong to this sub-category of engraved doorjamb capitals are located on opposite sides of the entrance from the atrium to the nave of the North Church (plan 3). The capitals are decorated with similar compositions on both sides of their protruding trapezoidal facets. The southern capital of the two, SH.N.2.CP.106, is decorated with an engraving of a rectangular zone that takes up most of the front face of the facet (pl. 72). 66 This rectangular area is inhabited by two rows of "star-like shapes", four in the top row and four in the bottom. Interestingly these "star-like shapes" are not set in "frames" as they would normally appear. Below this part of the composition, towards the bottom of the capital there is a band of four, bas relief elliptical "lozenges", followed by a band of "zigzag pattern" composed of upside-down triangles. The narrower side of this trapezoidal facet is decorated only with the bands of "lozenges" and "zigzag pattern". The northern capital of the same entrance, SH.N.2,CP.107, is ornamented with the same composition that appears on capital SH.N.2.CP.106, with the exception of two rows of three instead of four "star-like shapes" in the rectangular frame, and in addition these "star-like shapes" are set in "frames" (pl. 73).<sup>67</sup> The only decoration that appears on the narrower side of the trapezoidal facet of this capital is a band of "zigzag pattern" at the bottom of the capital.

### 2.2.5.4 Cylindrical Column Capitals

Three cylindrical column capitals were documented out of their original context and currently there are no such capitals that are located *in situ*. All three capitals have a square *abacus* above a cylindrical body, which has lathe-made grooves

<sup>66</sup> This capital is discussed by: Woolley and Lawrence (1936), 101, Fig. 15. This capital is currently restored in a different location than the one which was described by Woolley and Lawrence: "A narrow vaulted passage in the north-west corner of the court leads through into a chamber from which, it would seem, a door under the campanile gave access to the church. An open space, lying behind this chamber, separated the monastery buildings from the wall of the south chapel. On the other side of the chamber, in the recess between the main or public door of the church and the north-west corner of the monastery, was an open *diwan* or loggia, having two arches that gave upon the church square. The arches rested on capitals, decorated with trellis pattern ... ". The capital which is paired with this element was published in: Segal (1988), 58.

67 Segal (1988), 58.

around its circumference. All three of the capitals in this sub-category are carved in limestone and are decorated in a very similar style; this may indicate that they were carved during the same time period and perhaps by the same artisan.

Capital SH.U.CP.102 is decorated with a sequence of two spaced grooves followed by a fillet band in sunken relief, a band that is triangular in section in low sunken relief, a fillet band that is slightly less depressed and three evenly spaced grooves (pl. 74). Capital SH.U.CP.103 appears to have been decorated with a similar composition to the previous capital, but its state of preservation is too poor to describe in detail the sequence of the decoration (pl. 75). This capital is unique in that some of the painted decoration that was applied to it is visible. There are some remnants of red paint on the abacus and on some spots around the circumference of the capital. On the abacus the paint is more visible. On one side of the abacus there is a symmetrical decoration in red paint. The decoration consists of a red line running horizontally across the top of the abacus which at one point, before it reaches the center, turns downwards in a 90 degree angle. The downward, vertical line continues on the face of the capital as well, below the abacus. This is mirrored from the other side of the face of the abacus, as well. It is likely that capital SH.U.CP.102 was decorated in a similar fashion, with red paint.

The third capital in this sub-category, SH.CP.52, bears an engraved Greek inscription on its abacus that bears remnants of red paint in the crevices of the letters (pl. 76).<sup>68</sup> Below the *abacus* the cylindrical body of the vessel is decorated in an engraved sequence of: three evenly spaced grooves, a sunken relief band that is triangular in section, followed by four evenly spaced grooves.

### 2.2.6 Cornices

The 24 cornices that were documented in Shivta, whether they are located in situ or not, are all of the type that was part of an engaged pilaster that carried the weight of an arch. These architectural elements were all divided into sub-categories according to the dominant motif appearing in their decoration as well as the complexity of the composition. Thus the stylistic categories are: "minimalistic composition with a single sunk fillet", "minimalistic composition with multiple sunk fillets", "minimalistic composition with 'zigzag pattern", "complex composition with 'zigzag pattern" and "varia". The last sub-category includes three cornices that were decorated with less prevalent reliefs and engravings.

<sup>68</sup> Rosenthal-Heginbottom (1982), 107.

## 2.2.6.1 Minimalistic Composition with a Single Fillet

The most minimalistic ornamentation of cornices includes a flat, smooth and upright band at the top of the cornice and a single sunk fillet at the bottom of the element. There are seven cornices that can be classified in this sub-category, nearly all documented in their original location. Four cornices are located in the dwelling known as the "Pool House" (SH.A.11.CR.2, SH.A.11.CR.3, SH.A.11.CR.4 and SH.A.11. CR.5) (pls. 77–80, plan 2), one in a dwelling at the southeastern section of the site (SH.L.1.CR.50) (pl. 81, plan 10), and two in the narthex of the South Church (SH.P.2.CR.56<sup>69</sup> and SH.P.3.CR.57) (pls. 82–83, plan 5).

All of the cornices from the "Pool House" were carved in limestone and the rest are carved in chalk. In a comparison of the measurements of these cornices there appears to be no correlation between the heights and width of the elements. The upright smooth band at the top is between 2–3.5cm in height and is always bordered at the bottom by a very thin horizontal groove, which was probably a guideline carved by the artisan. The sunk fillets at the bottom, for the most part, are not preserved well enough for comparative purposes. All of the elements in this subgroup are very similar, apart from cornice SH.P.3.CR.57. This cornice is located in the narthex of the South Church, it is slightly larger than the others, its face slopes inwardly more and it is not decorated with a sunk fillet.

## 2.2.6.2 Minimalistic Composition with Multiple Sunk Fillets

Cornices SH.A.9.CR.6, SH.A.9.CR.7 and SH.A.9.CR.8 are all located in Room 9 of the "Pool House" **(pls. 84–86, plan 2).** All three are carved in limestone and at the top decorated with an upright, smooth and flat band (as the previously described cornices). At the bottom of these architectural elements there are several graded sunk reliefs. The first two cornices are decorated with three sunk reliefs and the third cornice with two. The heights of the sunk reliefs are all between 2–2.5cm and there is no clear correlation between the heights of the elements and their width, all of which have different measurements.

### 2.2.6.3 Minimalistic Composition with "Zigzag Pattern"

The assemblage of cornices from Shivta also includes elements with a minimalistic decoration of a flat, smooth and upright band at the top of the element and a band of "zigzag pattern" at the bottom. The triangles that make up the pattern are upside-down and the area left below this part of the decoration is in sunken relief, an effect that adds three-dimensionality to the composition. These cornices are carved

<sup>69</sup> Segal (1988), 97.

<sup>70</sup> The term "Pool House" is Segal's, (Segal (1983), 33-44), while the room number is my own.

both in limestone and chalk and are currently located at a variety of locations at the site; of the six elements at the site three are located *in situ* and three in collapse.

The first two cornices (SH.E.1.CR.33 and SH.E.1.CR.3471) to be described are part of three cornices with an identical decoration that are located in a pile of collapsed architectural elements in a structure north of the Central Church (pls. 87–88).<sup>72</sup> These cornices were carved in limestone and their decoration is continuous on three sides of the element. The "zigzag pattern" band near the bottom of the element is composed of relatively large upside-down triangles. A comparison of the measurements taken of the various components of the decoration reveals that for the most part they are only a few millimeters apart. This suggests that perhaps these cornices were decorated by the same artisan. Another pair of cornices with an identical decoration, indicating that they were carved by the same hand, are cornices SH.N.1.CR.58 and SH.N.1.CR.59. These cornices were carved in chalk and are currently located in situ in a room in the northeastern corner of the North Church complex (pls. 89-90). The composition here is slightly different: the flat, smooth and upright band at the top of the cornice is slightly raised and the "zigzag pattern" band is slightly more sunken than the face of the cornice above it.

An additional cornice that is located *in situ* is SH.A.12.CR.1 (pl. 91, plan 2).<sup>73</sup> This cornice was carved in limestone and is located in the courtyard of the dwelling known as the "Pool House". The decoration is the same as that of cornices SH.E.1. CR.33 and SH.E.1.CR.34, but here the upside-down triangles that form the "zigzag pattern" are much smaller. This type of "zigzag pattern", composed of small triangles, also appears on cornice SH.M.CR.55 (pl. 92). This cornice is carved in limeychalk and is currently located in a pile of architectural elements in an open area southwest of the South Church (plan 1). Due to the poor preservation state of this element its measurements could not be compared to the cornice from the "Pool House" and it is not clear if they were decorated by the same artisan.

## 2.2.6.4 Complex Composition with "Zigzag Pattern"

Five cornices with a more elaborate composition of a band of "zigzag pattern" at the bottom of the element were documented. On these cornices the area between the upright band at the top and the "zigzag pattern" at the bottom was also decorated with engravings and reliefs. These cornices are located at a variety of locations at the site and were carved both in limestone and chalk.

The first two cornices, SH.L.1.CR.49 and SH.L.1.CR.51, are located in situ in a dwelling at the southeastern section of the site (pls. 93-94, plan 10).<sup>74</sup> The first

<sup>71</sup> Cornice SH.E.1.CR.34 was published by: Segal (1988), 107.

<sup>72</sup> These cornices are located in a structure defined by me as Building E on plan 1.

<sup>73</sup> Segal (1988), 103.

<sup>74</sup> Cornice SH.L.1.CR.49 is published in: Segal (1988), 108.

cornice is less preserved than the latter, but it can be discerned that they are both decorated with the same ornamentation of an upright band at the top that is followed by an engraved decoration of a rhombus in the center flanked by a "fishbone pattern" that points towards the edges of the cornice. At the bottom of the cornice there is a "zigzag pattern" band and the area below it is left in sunken relief. An examination of the style, workmanship and measurements of the two cornices suggest that they were decorated by the same artisan.

The three additional cornices that belong to this category are not located in their original settings. The first, SH.C.1.CR.32, is currently located in collapse in the Central Church and was carved in chalk **(pl. 95)**. The area between the top and bottom bands is decorated with a bas relief of a rectangular frame which is inhabited by two rows of "star-like shapes in frames". There are six "stars" in each row. The lines that compose this pattern are relatively thin (0.4cm in thickness) and slightly convex. Another element with a similar style of decoration is cornice SH.G.CR.38, located in collapse in a street northwest of the Central Church **(pl. 96)**. In this case the area between the two bands is decorated with a row of "star-like shapes in frames" followed by two graded fillets. The row of "star-like shapes in frames" is very similar in its style to the same motif appearing on the previous cornice and it is possible that they were decorated by the same craftsman.

The last cornice in this sub-category, SH.CR.10, is very unique in the style of its decoration **(pl. 97).** The area in the center of the cornice is decorated with a band of small round stylized rosettes. The rosettes are composed of an incised circle approximately 5cm in diameter. The diameters of all the rosettes are roughly the same and it seems that they were compass-made. The circles are slightly concave and in their center there is a round boss in bas relief. The diameters of the bosses are between 1 and 1.5 centimeters. There are faint remnants of thin incisions engraved between the bosses and the edges of the circles in the same style as in a "wheel-spoke rosette". This band is followed by a graded fillet, and then a further sunk band of a "zigzag pattern". The area below this band is in carved sunk relief and is left undecorated.

### 2.2.6.5 Varia

Three cornices that could not be classified on the basis of the style of their decoration in any of the previously described categories are architectural elements: SH. CR.41, SH.M.CR.54 and SH.M.CR.52. None of these cornices are located *in situ* and their decoration does not allow for a comparison with any of the other cornices in this assemblage.

**<sup>75</sup>** Due to the preservation state of this element the number of "X's" in the square frames could not be counted.

<sup>76</sup> Segal (1988), 105.

Two of these cornices are quite short, compared to the previously discussed elements, $^{77}$  Cornice SH.CR.41 was carved in chalk and decorated at the top with a flat, smooth and upright band (pl. 98).<sup>78</sup> Towards the bottom of the element it is decorated with a bas relief "beads-and-reels" band. The band is bordered at the top and bottom by a thin slightly convex band. The "beads" are in the shape of horizontally positioned rhomboids. On each of the rhomboids four diagonal lines are engraved. The "reels" are in the shape of vertically positioned rectangles that are hollowedout. The second relatively short cornice is SH.M.CR.54 and it is decorated with a minimalistic composition of two graded fillets at the bottom (pl. 99). This decoration is carved continuously on three sides of the element. The third cornice belonging to the varia sub-category is element SH.M.CR.52 (pl. 100).<sup>79</sup> This cornice is uniquely decorated on three of its sides with a high relief ovolo molding, bordered at the top with a flat, smooth and upright band. This element is currently located in a pile of decorated architectural elements in an open area southwest of the South Church, but a similar element is located in situ in the baptistery of the North Church, and from this element the directionality of cornice SH.M.CR.52 can be inferred.

#### 2.2.7 Arches

The arches at Shivta hold various functions; the most common arches support the ceilings of structures, but there are also arches that are constructed above entrances and niches. The arches belonging to the two latter categories are more commonly composed of decorated voussoirs. Most of the decorated arch segments documented at Shivta are currently in a state of collapse and only three voussoirs, which form an arch above a niche, have been documented in situ. The voussoirs have been divided into categories on the basis of their decorations. The main motifs appearing in the first three categories are: "ovolo moldings", "zigzag pattern" and "star-like shapes in frames"; the last category, "varia", includes arch segments with a variety of different decorational compositions that could not be placed in any of the other stylistic categories.

<sup>77</sup> Cornice SH.CR.41 is approximately 11.5cm high and cornice SH.M.CR.54 is 9.7cm high. The average height of cornices at the site is 16cm.

<sup>78</sup> Segal (1988), 106.

<sup>79</sup> A similar cornice from the North Church (west wall of baptistery) is published in: Segal (1988), 101.

## 2.2.7.1 Ovolo Molding

The first group of voussoirs includes arch segments ornamented with an *ovolo* molding that forms the main part of the decorational composition. Four voussoirs belong to this category, all documented in a state of collapse; three, SH.M.AR.12, SH.M.AR.13 and SH.M.AR.15, as part of a pile of architectural elements located in an open area southwest of the South Church, and one, SH.J.AR.35, in the street southwest of the two water reservoirs or "pools" **(pls. 101–104, plan 1)**. In voussoirs SH.M.AR.12, SH.M.AR.13 and SH.J.AR.35 the composition of the decoration is the same: a fillet in bas relief followed by an *ovolo* molding in high relief. The measurements of these four elements are not similar enough to allow the hypothesis that they may have been a part of the same arch. The decoration of voussoir SH.M.AR.15 is slightly different. In this case the *ovolo* molding is at the top and it is followed by a bas relief fillet.

## 2.2.7.2 Zigzag Pattern

The second group of voussoirs includes three voussoirs (SH.P.1.AR.16, SH.P.1.AR.17 and SH.P.1.AR.18) that form a single arch that is located *in situ*, over a niche, at the southern end of the narthex of the South Church **(pls. 105–107, plan 5).** These three arch segments were documented and measured in order to ascertain what degree of similarity the artisan reached when carving the stones that were all part of the same construction and were decorated in a continuous fashion. Since the decoration of all three elements is identical it will be described uniformly and the similarities and variations between the measurements of the ornaments will be discussed.

The sizes of the three voussoirs vary; the keystone is the smallest, while the eastern and western voussoirs are roughly the same size with a difference of a few centimeters in their measurements.<sup>81</sup> The decoration begins at the top of the arch with a flat fillet defined at the bottom by a thin groove that may have served as a guideline for the craftsman. The height of this fillet is not uniform and ranges

**<sup>80</sup>** Segal (1988), 114. In his description of this arch Segal suggests that the niche over which it was constructed was "intended for a "statue" or some sacred item, as the round depression beneath it attests." I would like to suggest that the niche was not intended for a sacred item, but for a vessel containing water (possibly a jar) that could have been placed in the round depression in the floor of the niche. Similar niches for storing water jars are a common feature in the southern walls of courtyards in Byzantine dwellings. The southern walls usually receive the greatest amount of shade. Examples of such niches can be seen in domestic dwellings in Shivta. It is important to note that this niche is constructed in the southern wall of the narthex not far from a water cistern.

**<sup>81</sup>** The keystone measures: height – 18.3cm, width – 22.2cm to approximately 38.5cm. The eastern voussoir measures: height – 17cm, width – approximately 30cm to approximately 45.8cm. The western voussoir measures: height – approximately 17.5cm, width – approximately 32.8cm to approximately 48cm. The outer span of the arch is 82.7cm and the inner span is 48.7cm.

between 2.8cm to 3.5cm. Below the flat fillet the face of the arch slopes inwardly<sup>82</sup> and most of this area is left undecorated. The height of the undecorated portion of the face of the arch ranges between approximately 8.5cm in the eastern voussoir to 10.8cm in the western youssoir. At the bottom the face of the arch is decorated with a band of "zigzag pattern" composed of small upright triangles in sunken relief. The height of the triangles forming the pattern is about 2cm, on average, and the width of their bases is about 2cm, on average. However, the triangles seem to get slightly smaller from the eastern voussoir to the western one, as if their outlines were carved by freehand and not with the use of a template. Approximately half a centimeter to a centimeter above the apex of each of the triangles that form the pattern, there is a small circular depression that has been drilled into the face of the element. This motif is not commonly paired with the "zigzag pattern". The diameter of these depressions is uniform at 0.4cm. The area below the "zigzag pattern" band is 3cm in height and is left undecorated in sunken relief. In the center of the keystone there is a faded thin engraving of a circle (10.4cm in diameter), it is not clear if this circle is part of the original decorational composition or is part of a later addition as the arch and niche are covered with various kinds of modern engraved graffiti.

The arch was not only decorated with reliefs but also with paint. Some remnants of dark red paint appear on the top band of the keystone and there are clear remains of the same colored paint in the "zigzag pattern" band and in the small depressions above it on the western voussoir. In addition, on the bottom part of the eastern and western voussoirs that constitute the sides of the niche, there are painted decorations. This decoration was painted in the same red paint that can be seen on the front face of the arch and although the composition is quite fragmentary it appears to be of a "zigzag pattern" bordered on top and bottom by a straight line.

### 2.2.7.3 Star-like Shapes in Frames

The third group of arches includes three voussoirs (SH.M.AR.14, SH.N1.AR.24 and SH.P.6.AR.21) that bear a similar decoration (pls. 108–110). In the center of the narrow side or front of the arch segment there is a band of mid-relief "star-like shapes in frames". The arms of the "stars" are triangular in section and wider towards the center of the "star" than the ends of the arms, giving it its star-like shape. The band is bordered on top and bottom by a thin horizontal groove. The band in the center of voussoirs SH.M.AR.14 and SH.N.1.AR.24 contains a row of three "star-like shapes in frames" and although the measurements of both of these elements and their decorations are not the same, they are quite similar. Voussoir SH.M.AR.14 is currently

<sup>82</sup> The face of the element sloping inwardly below a flat fillet at the top is a common feature in the decorations of cornices both at Shivta and at other Byzantine sites throughout the Negev.

part of a pile of architectural elements located in an open area southwest of the South Church, and voussoir SH.N.1.AR.24 is part of a pile of architectural elements located in the northeastern room of the North Church complex. It is interesting to note that A. Segal, in his catalogue of the decorated architectural elements from Shivta, published a very similar voussoir located *in situ* as part of the half-dome of the baptistery of the South Church.<sup>83</sup> It could be suggested that both of these voussoirs were originally part of different sections of this half-dome, even though they are presently located at opposite ends of the site.

Voussoir SH.P.6.AR.21 is decorated on both its front and the back sides (narrower sides), which essentially define this element as having two front sides. <sup>84</sup> On one side the decoration consists of a band of five "star-like shapes in frames", carved in a similar fashion to the two previously described elements. The decoration of the opposing narrow side of the element includes a series of reliefs and architectural moldings that could also place this arch segment in the stylistic category of voussoirs decorated with *ovolo* moldings (to be described subsequently). The decoration of this side of the element consists of a high relief band decorated with schematized dentils that are separated by deep vertical grooves, below this band there is an *ovolo* molding, followed by two graded, relatively thin, fillets.

#### 2.2.7.4 Varia

The last group of voussoirs from Shivta includes five architectural elements that could not be classified as part of any of the previously defined categories. All five voussoirs are decorated on one of their narrower sides, or fronts. The decorations on these elements share no similarities and are both carved in relief and engraved.

The first voussoir is element SH.D.1.AR.4, located in a pile of architectural elements, north of the Central Church (**pl. 111**).<sup>85</sup> This arch segment is decorated on the center of its narrow side with a band of wide rhomboids, two in the center flanked by a half-rhombus on either end. The rhomboids are not higher than the face of the element, but the triangles that are formed in the spaces that are left by

**<sup>83</sup>** For element SH.M.AR.14 see: Segal (1988), 113, this citation can also serve as a parallel for vous-soir SH.N.1.AR.24.

**<sup>84</sup>** Segal (1988), 110. In Segal's catalogue an arch with similar voussoirs is published as it was reconstructed by the Colt Expedition. Presently this arch is no longer standing, and this voussoir may be a segment of it.

**<sup>85</sup>** Segal (1988), 120; this is an identical item that was published by Segal and is also located in the same pile of architectural elements. Segal suggests, by comparing the decoration of the published voussoir to decorations appearing on other two elements, a voussoir and a cornice (cf. Segal (1988), pp. 115 and 99, respectively), that the smooth rhomboids would have been further decorated had their decoration have been completed. I would like to suggest that since there are two separate voussoirs with this same "smooth rhomboids" decoration, that this was the intended composition and that the decoration has indeed been completed.

the rhomboids are deeply hollowed-out. The band is defined at the top and bottom by a thin groove which was possibly engraved by the craftsman as a guideline.

The second voussoir, SH.P.5.AR.20, is decorated on the bottom half of its narrow side with an engraved band of a "fishbone pattern" that points to the right (pl. 112).86 Below this engraved band there is a band of sunk fillet. The distances between the engraved incisions that form the "fishbone pattern" are not consistent and seem to have been made with no preplanning. The grooves also slightly appear on the sunk fillet, although this does not seem to be part of the composition, only a byproduct of the carving of the decoration.

The third voussoir that is part of this *varia* group is SH.P.6.AR.22 (pl. 113).<sup>87</sup> This arch segment is decorated in the center of its narrower side with a band of hollowed-out vertical ovals. The area that is left above and below the ovals within the band is also hollowed-out. The band is defined on the top and bottom by a deep and relatively thick groove that is carved about a centimeter away from the band of ovals.

Voussoir SH.M.AR.19 is currently located in a pile of decorated architectural elements that is adjacent to the South Church (pl. 114). This arch segment is quite weathered, but nonetheless the composition of its decoration can be discerned. The ornamentation begins at the top of the element with a high relief band of vertically rectangular dentils that are defined and separated by thin grooves. Below this band the main part of the face of the voussoir is decorated with a cyma recta molding followed by two graded fillets. The decoration of this arch segment is similar, though not identical, to the decoration of previously described voussoir SH.P.6. AR.21.

The last voussoir in this category is SH.N.1.AR.23, which is an arch segment from an arch that was previously restored over the entrance from the atrium to the south antechamber of the North Church (pl. 115, plan 3).88 Currently this arch is dismantled and its stones are part of a pile of architectural elements stored in the northwest room of the church complex. Ten voussoirs with the same decoration are located in this room, of which segment SH.N.1.AR.23 was documented as a sample. The decoration is located on the top half of the narrower side of the stone. At the top there is a band of "zigzag pattern". Uniquely, only the outlines of the triangles that form this pattern are carved in bas relief. This top band is followed by two graded fillets.

**<sup>86</sup>** Segal (1988), 116; this voussoir is currently located as part of a collection of architectural elements stored in a room in the southwestern part of the South Church complex.

<sup>87</sup> Segal (1988), 115; this voussoir is currently located in the same collection of architectural elements as the previously described voussoir.

<sup>88</sup> Segal (1988), 118.

### 2.2.8 Architectural Elements with Undefined Architectural Context

The assemblage of decorated architectural elements includes three artifacts with an undefined architectural context. These items are not located *in situ* and their function could not be determined according to their shape and style of decoration.

The first element in this group, SH.UC.2, is a rectangular-shaped ashlar that is finely hewn on all sides but the back, which was left roughly worked **(pl. 116).**<sup>89</sup> The front of the element is decorated with a raised inhabited medallion. The frame of the medallion is composed of a band that is semi-circular in section. Inside the medallion there is a bas relief rhombus and square frame. This frame is further inhabited by another medallion that is composed of a bas relief band that is semi-circular in section and in it there is a depiction of a "wheel-spoke" rosette. The rosette is slightly concave; in its center there is an engraved circle from which engraved lines radiate.

Architectural element SH.M.UC.4 may have originally been a cornice, but the poor preservation state of this element does not allow for a clear identification of its original function (**pl. 117**). This item is shaped as a right-angled trapezoid and has two continuously decorated sides, the front and the narrower side. The decoration consists of two graded bands at the bottom of the element. The top band is of bas relief dentils separated by deep vertical grooves. This band is slightly more depressed than the face of the element and the band below it is further depressed and left smooth.

The last architectural element in this category, SH.Q.1.UC.30, has a unique shape which is dissimilar to any other element documented at the site (pl. 118). It may have originally functioned as a lintel over a narrow passage or a window. The overall shape is of a large and wide regular trapezoid. Unlike other trapezoidal architectural elements such as cornices, the element is decorated on the side with the largest surface area and would have been too big to serve as a cornice. The front side of the element is decorated in its center with an engraved medallion composed of a garland-like band of a "fishbone pattern". This side is framed at the edges with a border consisting of two parallel engraved lines. Along the wider edge of the trapezoidal shape forming the front face of the element, and directly below the engraved garland-medallion, the border consists of two adjacent concave horizontal bands carved 1.5cm above the edge of the ashlar. Directly below these concave bands, at the edge of the element there is a unique decoration of a band of a three dimensional "zigzag pattern". The band does not cover the entire length of the edge and stretches across 50cm along the center of this side of the element. The "zigzag

<sup>89</sup> Segal (1988), 137.

**<sup>90</sup>** The size of the element is: width -71.2-77.5cm, depth -22.5cm, height -37.8cm. This is larger than the average size of a cornice.

pattern" is carved in the shape of upside-down triangles that appear two dimensional at the front face of the element and are continually carved in high relief on the depth side. Most often "zigzag pattern" bands are carved in bas or sunken relief and at times they are engraved. Also they are not carved on the edge of the element, but slightly above it. In the case of architectural element SH.Q.1.UC.30 it seems that the triangles forming the "zigzag pattern" were carved out completely to provide a more interesting bottom edge. At the bottom side of the element, where the negative of the pattern was carved, the lines made by the craftsman's tool were left crudely visible and it seems that this side of the element was probably not meant to be the prominent face of this artifact.

### 2.3 Oboda

#### 2.3.1 Introduction

Oboda is located on the northwestern slope of the Ramon ridge overlooking the basin of Nahal 'Zin (plan 11). The site was constructed on one of the main trade routes of the Negev that lead from Petra to Gaza. The earliest archaeological remains indicating settlement at the site are dedicatory inscriptions dated to the end of the first century BCE - the reign of the Nabatean king Aretas IV. Although not much is known of Oboda during the late 1st and 2nd centuries CE, it is suggested that during this time the town became the central settlement in an agricultural system that included the surrounding farmsteads. The excavations of the Roman army camp, located at the northeastern end of the 'Avedat spur, revealed that it too can be dated to this time period and that it was abandoned not long after. During the 3rd century CE widespread construction was conducted at the site, including: a new residential quarter, a bakery, two pagan temples and the building of the *Khan*. It was during this time that the settlement became more urban in its nature.

Further changes took effect at the site between the fourth and sixth centuries. This is the era in which Christianity became the prominent religion of the region. During this time most of the inhabitants of Oboda lived in dwellings that were constructed as a stone-built structure attached to a quarried cave. These cave and structure dwellings were located in eight parallel leveled streets, one above the other, built along the northern, western and southern slopes of the settlement. During this period Oboda became a center for wine production and it is estimated that its population comprised about 2,000 inhabitants. The overall town plan of Oboda during the Byzantine period included: the acropolis on which a fort and two church complexes were constructed; two residential quarters – one south of the acropolis and the other along the slope; and a bathhouse located on the plain, west of the settlement. Negev dates the destruction of the churches and the abandonment of the site to the mid-30s of the 7th century, coinciding with the Arab conquests. <sup>91</sup>

The continued habitation in Oboda from the Roman to the Byzantine period provides an opportunity to view the changes in the preferred style of decoration from one period to another. Furthermore, decorated architectural elements dating to the Roman period were used in *spolia* during the Byzantine period in such a manner that clearly marked them as no longer in "vogue" and even temporal, as in the case of architectural members that may have originated in the pagan temples. For example, these elements were incorporated into walls of Byzantine structures with their decorated profiles turned purposefully towards the centers of the walls and away from view. <sup>92</sup>

#### 2.3.2 Floor Tiles

Three decorated floor tiles were examined at Oboda. All three are located *in situ* and decorated with sunken reliefs; one in the North Church and the other two in the South Church. <sup>93</sup> The workmanship of the floor tile located in the basilica of the North Church is of a higher quality than that of the floor tiles from the basilica of the South Church. These architectural elements may have been decorated by different artisans. In the assemblage, these three floor tiles are a unique feature to Oboda. Therefore, they were not included in the statistical analyses that are discussed in the following chapters.

Floor tile OD.D.2.FT.1 is located in the second intercolumniation of the southern aisle of the basilica of the North Church **(pl. 119, plan 12).** <sup>94</sup> In the center of this element there is a slightly protruding decorated circular facet. The carvings on this floor tile were clearly, carefully executed with the aid of a compass. The protruding circle contains a six-petaled rosette of thin needle-shaped petals that are spaced widely apart and carved in sunken relief. In the spaces between these petals there are six compass-made sunken relief "Greek crosses" with flared arms. It is interesting to note that one of these crosses was not fully carved and only few grooves mark some of its outline.

<sup>91</sup> The above introduction is based on: Gutwein (1981), 167–170; Elliot (1982), 113; Rubin (1990), 9; Shereshevski (1991), 36–48; Negev (1997), 1–9; Goren and Fabian (2008), 347–350; Fabian (2011), http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report\_detail\_eng.asp?id=1709&mag\_id=118 accessed December 10, 2012.

<sup>92</sup> Szidat (1997), 181-183.

**<sup>93</sup>** These decorated floor tiles are clearly not tomb cover-stones as indicated by their orientation. Furthermore, floor tile OD.D.2.FT.1was raised by Negev during the excavation of the church and no burial related finds were discovered. Negev (1997), 116.

<sup>94</sup> Negev (1997), 116.

Floor tiles OD.E.5.FT.2 and OD.E.5.FT.3 are located in situ at the eastern ends of the northern and southern aisles of the church (pls. 120-121, plan 13). Both of these elements are decorated with "Greek crosses" carved in sunken relief. The crosses have relatively thin arms (2cm thick on average), that have the same width throughout. The crosses are not necessarily in the center of the floor tiles, but their location is roughly in the center of the aisle. This may indicate that they were carved in the floor after the tiles have already been laid.

#### 2.3.3 Bases

The bases documented at Oboda can be divided into two main groups: doorjamb bases and column bases. The architectural elements in each group bear a resemblance in their compositions to one another. Therefore, they are divided into the two main groups on the basis of their architectural type and do not warrant any further stylistic divisions.

### 2.3.3.1 Doorjamb Bases

The most prominent ornament in the compositions of the five doorjamb bases, which were documented in their original locations, is the "star-like shape in frame" motif. All of the doorjamb bases are carved as rectangular ashlars, with a protruding trapezoidal facet, on which the decoration is located. The first two bases are a pair and belong to the same entrance in a dwelling located at the southern part of the "Roman Quarter". 95 Both bases are ornamented with a similar, but not identical composition. The decoration appears on the front protruding trapezoidal facet and the depth face of the ashlar. The decoration is of bas relief rows of "star-like shapes in frames". On base OD,T.1.BP.37 there are two rows. In each row there are two "star-like shapes in frames", one above the other (pl. 122, plan 14). On base OD.T.1. BP.38 there are two rows, with three "star-like shapes in frames" on the front side, and three rows with two "star-like shapes in frames" on the narrower side of the element (pl. 123, plan 14).

A sample of three doorjamb bases was documented in the only excavated house of the Byzantine "Cave City" located below the acropolis of the site (plans 11 and 15). 96 Bases OD.C.2.BP.10 and OD.C.2.BP.11 are located on opposite sides of the same entrance from Room 1 of the dwelling to Room 3. The style of the decoration is somewhat similar to that of the two previously described bases, although the composition is more elaborate. The trapezoidal facets of these two bases are 3.5cm

<sup>95</sup> This dwelling was excavated by Dr. Peter Fabian on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority and was designated as "Building T" during the excavations. Personal communication.

<sup>96</sup> Negev (1997), 157-169.

shorter than the height of the element. Base OD.C.2.BP.10 is decorated in bas relief with a band of a "zigzag pattern", a "fillet" and a "rope pattern" band **(pl. 124, plan 15)**. In the center of the area below these three bands there are two carved "star-like" ornaments, side by side. The depth side of the base is decorated more simplistically with two "fillets" at the top of the trapezoidal facet. Base OD.C.2.BP.11 is decorated on the front side with the same sequence of reliefs, but instead of the two "star-like" elements there is a row of three "star-like shapes in frames" **(pl. 125, plan 15)**. The depth side of the base is decorated with a band of "zigzags" followed by two "fillets". In the center of this side of the element, below these reliefs, there is a sunken relief of a "Greek Cross" – an ornament that customarily does not appear on doorjamb bases.

The final doorjamb base (OD.C.2.BP.12) from the "Byzantine dwelling" is located at the entrance leading to Room 2 from Room 1 (pl. 126, plan 15). It is decorated in a similar style to the previously described bases, with a band of "zigzags", a "fillet" and a "rope pattern" band. In the area below this sequence there is a rectangular area containing two rows, one on top of the other, with four "star-like shapes in frames", in each. The depth of the base is decorated with a "zigzag" band, a "fillet" and a "rope pattern" band. According to the similar style and execution of the decoration of these doorjamb bases, it is quite likely that all of the bases in the Byzantine dwelling were carved by the same hand during the same time period. It is also possible that the same artisan decorated the bases located in the "Roman Quarter" on the acropolis.

#### 2.3.3.2 Colum Bases

Characteristically the ceilings and roofs of dwellings were supported by arches as opposed to columns, therefore the most common place to find a round column base would be a large public structure. The seven round column bases that belong to the first category of elements are located in various parts of the North and South Churches. They are decorated by lathe made engravings and high, bas and sunken relief moldings. Column base OD.D.1.BP.30 is currently located in the atrium of the North Church, but probably not in its original location (pl. 127, plan 12). The element is weathered, but its decoration is still discernible and surrounds the bottom section of the base. The composition includes a *cavetto*, two adjacent, thin, semicircular bands in sunken relief, and at the bottom a *torus* band.

The other six column bases are all decorated in a similar fashion, although some are carved in limestone and some in chalk. Elements OD.D.1.BP.31, OD.D.1. BP.32, OD.D.1.BP.33 and OD.D.1.BP.34 are currently located in the North Church **(pls. 128–131, plan 12)**. Bases OD.E.5.BP.35 and OD.E.5.BP.36 are located in the South Church **(pls. 132–133, plan 13)**. The decoration is mainly located at the bottom of the base and consists of two *torus* moldings with a space of a few centimeters left between them. On some bases there are few thin graded bands above the lower

torus band. The entire face of the bases is covered with thin incisions, made by a lathe. It is possible that some of these incisions were made by the artisan as guidelines for the dressing of the stone.

### 2.3.4 Lintels

The seven lintels examined at Oboda bear a wide variety of ornaments and were therefore divided into two main sub-categories. The first category of lintels includes three architectural elements that are decorated mainly with geometric motifs. The second category includes four lintels in which a faunal motif is a prominent part of the composition. The types of animals that appear on these lintels cannot be identified conclusively, because their depiction is very schematic, but the "menagerie" seems to include lions, oxen and leopards. All of the lintels are presented within each of the sub-categories from the most simplistically to the most elaborately decorated.

## 2.3.4.1 Geometric Compositions

Three lintels bearing geometric compositions were documented at the site. The first, lintel OD.F.1.LT.2, is located above the entrance to the northwestern corner tower of the Byzantine fort (pl. 134, plan 16). The decoration consists of a single arched, nearly hemispherical band carved in bas relief. In what appears to be the center of the lintel (though not quite the center of the arched band) there is a very thin, vertical groove. This groove may have been a guideline engraved by the craftsman in the process of planning the decoration of the lintel.

Another lintel with a similar decoration of an arched band is architectural element OD.G.1,LT.17 (pl. 135, plan 16). This lintel is currently located on the floor of the southwestern tower of the fort. The arched band is composed of a series of "beads" carved in bas relief. The lintel is broken in half, but enough of the decoration is preserved to describe the outline of the composition. In the center of the lintel, directly below the arched band, there is a bas relief protruding disk that is slightly concave. In the center of the disk there is a bas relief boss. To the right of the disk there is a bas relief depiction of a six-petaled rosette set within a medallion. The petals are in the shape of thin, hollowed-out needles formed by the spaces created in-between flared triangles that point towards the center of the rosette. The medallion around the rosette is composed of a semi-circular band with a thin groove incised around its inner section.97

<sup>97</sup> The other half of this lintel may be located somewhere among the debris and collapse stones lining the slopes below the acropolis of the site; as can be seen in a clip filmed in 1957 at the site. The relevant picture of the architectural element can be seen in minute 6:03 of the clip. YouTube,

The last architectural element in this sub-category is lintel OD.T.LT.20 (pls. 136a-b). It is an elongated rectangular lintel decorated with a nearly symmetrical composition. In the center of the lintel there is a uniquely shaped "Greek cross" set within a medallion formed by a band, semi-circular in section. The vertical arm of the cross is composed of two adjacent semi-circular bands in bas relief; it is cut in its center by a horizontal arm formed by a thick concave bas relief band. On either side of this center medallion there is a square composition filled with columns of "star-like shapes in frames". From left to right, there are two columns of three "star-like shapes" and one column of two larger "star-like shapes in frames". To the left and right of this section of the composition there are depictions of columns with a square capital and base. The shaft of the column is decorated with diagonal incisions, similar to the "rope pattern" motif. On the right column's shaft, the diagonal incisions lean to the left, and on the left column's shaft, the incisions lean to the right, towards the center of the composition. In the left and right ends of the composition there are squares carved in sunken relief, inhabited by "wheel-spoke" rosettes, set within medallions composed of a semi-circular band in bas relief. In the center of the rosette there are round bosses and the rosette on the left has 12 "wheel-spokes" while the one on the right has 14 "spokes". The difference in the number of the "spokes" between the two rosettes may indicate that the number of "spokes" has no symbolic significance.

## 2.3.4.2 Faunal Compositions

Lintel OD.E.LT.12 bears a schematic depiction of a four legged animal with a small body and a large head, possibly a lion **(pl.137)**. According to Negev this lintel was discovered in a room west of the basilica of the South Church.<sup>98</sup> The lintel is broken, but where its center may have been, a lion is carved in bas relief. In a similar fashion to the lion appearing on lintel OD.LT.18, the animal's mouth is slightly open. To the left of the lion there is a very crude engraving of a "Greek cross". The arms are formed by incised lines, narrower towards their ends. The somewhat simplistic quality of the decoration of this lintel suggests that it was decorated by a novice, an apprentice, or maybe an individual who was not a craftsman.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>&</sup>quot;1957 מצפה רמון. עבדת," uploaded August 5, 2010, accessed December 7, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Syn7iPioTt0. I would like to thank Yoram Haimi of the Israel Antiquities Authority for bringing this clip to my attention.

<sup>98</sup> Negev (1997), 148 (photo 239).

**<sup>99</sup>** Negev suggests that this lintel was decorated by the inhabitants of the room. Although this is a possibility, there is no clear indication that the people of Oboda decorated their on dwellings and this type of bas relief carving requires a greater effort than a simple engraving, graffiti, or dipinti. In addition, Negev also suggests that the lintel was also decorated with a "crudely carved cross".

Lintel OD.LT.18 was discovered in Negev's excavations of the "Roman Quarter" (pl. 138). Three quarters of the lintel were preserved (mainly the left side) therefore the layout of its entire decorational composition can be ascertained. In the center of the lintel there is a bas relief of a vessel, possibly a kantharos with two ornate handles with volutes at their ends. In the center of the body of the vessel there is an engraved band bearing a "zigzag" motif. The bottom half of the round body of the kantharos is decorated with deep vertical grooves, and below it there is a small conical base. This vessel was probably flanked by two four legged animals, possibly lions. Only the animal on the left of the vessel was preserved. The "lion" is carved schematically with a small body and short legs, the head is quite large and the mane is depicted by deep curving grooves. The eye of the "lion" is in the shape of a large elliptical depression, and the mouth is slightly ajar. The right paw of the animal is resting on the body of the kantharos.

Another lintel decorated with a symmetrical composition of two animals flanking a central motif, is lintel OD,LT.19a-b (pl. 139). 101 This lintel was broken into three parts, but only a small section of it is missing. Therefore, nearly the entire arrangement of the decoration is clear. In the center of the lintel there is an ornament, interpreted by Negev as a depiction of a fortress with round towers. This part of the composition includes an intertwined square and rhombus whose outlines are composed of two paralleling semicircular bands in bas relief. The outside square is upright, while the inner square is carved in a 45-degree angle. At the corners of these squares there are loops. To the left of this motif there appears to be another ornament with loops as part of the decoration, but the lintel is broken and therefore no suggestion can be made regarding this part of the composition. 102 The two geometric motifs in the center of the lintel are flanked by a four legged animal, one on either side. These animals face the center of the lintel; they appear to be quite large, with horns and cloven hooves. Negev has suggested that they may be oxen. 103 On various parts of the lintel remnants of red paint can be seen.

Although, there are some deeply engraved lines to the left of the 'lion' figure that may form a cross shape, their arrangement and the state of preservation of the lintel do not allow the clear identification of this type of motif.

<sup>100</sup> Negev (1997), 180 (photo 294).

<sup>101</sup> Negev (1997), 179-180 (photos 292-293).

<sup>102</sup> Negev interprets this ornament as a depiction of a fortress, basing his hypothesis on the discovery of the element in the vicinity of the citadel. This suggestion is problematic. There are few similarities between the actual structure and the ornament on the lintel. The citadel is rectangular with square towers while the ornament in the center of the lintel is square with round loops at the corners and an additional rhombus in its center. In addition, this interpretation does not offer an interpretation for the fragmented motif to the left of the intertwined square and rhombus.

<sup>103</sup> Negev (1997), 180.

In contrast to the other lintels in the Oboda assemblage lintel OD.H.1.LT.31 is carved in chalk and not limestone (pl. 140, plan11). 104 The lintel was discovered in a collapse near the southern entrance to the acropolis, not far from the western entrance to the South Church. It is currently reconstructed above this entrance. The decoration of the lintel is carved in relief and the composition is symmetrical. In the center of the lintel there is a vessel with a conical neck and base, and a round body with no handles. The vessel is flanked on either side by two animals, possibly leopards. The animals are facing the vessel with raised front paws and upturned tails. The torso and the neck of these two animals are covered with perforations in the same way that a leopard's body would be covered in spots. In addition, they lack a mane. A rope pattern band in high relief is carved above the center of the composition. On either side of the leopards and vessel, there are six-petaled rosettes set in raised square facets, and the whole composition is flanked at either end by round columns with square bases and capitals. There are remnants of red paint on various parts of the lintel and it seems that most of the area, in and around the relief decoration, was painted. 105

#### 2.3.5 Column Drums

Four decorated column drums were documented at the site; one currently located at the Visitor's Center, and three that may have been originally located in the complex of the North Church. The first of these is a fragment of a cylindrical column drum and the other three are decorated brackets, which are part of cylindrical column drums. As the compositions of these architectural elements are too varied to allow any grouping they are not divided into sub-categories.

Architectural element OD.CL.5 is a relatively small, quite weathered, fragment of a column drum, from an unknown location at the site (**pl. 141**). In the center of the drum there is a decoration of a wavy band of vine scrolls composed of a band that is semi-circular in section and carved in bas relief. Most of the band was not preserved, but in one section, there is a depiction of a grape bunch composed of small bas relief bosses. The band is defined at the top and bottom by a frame formed by a deep groove and a fillet molding. There are some remnants of red paint on the carved decoration of the column drum.

<sup>104</sup> Negev (1997), 46 (photo 49).

**<sup>105</sup>** Negev (1981), 42 (photo 35); in his publication of the Greek inscriptions from the Negev, Negev described and interprets a painted inscription that is no longer visible on the lintel. The letters that appear are, XMT at the top and below these the letters, KE, in ancient Greek. Negev mentions that this is a common doxology that was not found elsewhere in the towns of the Negev. The top part of the inscription is similar to an inscription that appears on element OD.1.UC.22 from the Citadel, which is described further on. Cf. Nongbri (2011), 64–68.

Three of the column drums in the assemblage are unique architectural elements that bear decorated "brackets". These are the only "bracketed" column drums that have been found in the Negev. 106 The "brackets" are composed of a type of lug that protrudes from the side of the column drum. These lugs are in the shape of an upside-down trapezoid. The average depth of the "brackets" is approximately 41cm and all three faces are decorated with reliefs. The trapezoidal face is divided into registers and the decoration, in all instances, begins with a band that is smooth and upright. Below the band the face of the "bracket" slopes inwardly. This is similar to the composition that often appears on decorated doorjamb capitals and bases. Each of the registers bears a relief decoration.

Column drum OD.D.2.CL.3 is decorated with a continuous composition on all three of its sides (pl. 142). <sup>107</sup> The various decorated registers will be described from top to bottom. The top register is decorated with a band of bas relief trefoil needleshaped leaves. This is followed by a band of alternating thin vertical bands and round bosses in a metopes and monoglyphs design. The register below appears to inhabit a wavy scroll. In the space between the curves of the scroll there seems to be a depiction of leaves with veins composed of diagonal engravings. This is the largest decorated zone on the bracket. At the bottom the element is decorated with a band of high relief square dentils and the decoration finishes with a sunk fillet. The decorated registers are separated by thin bas relief horizontal bands that are triangular in section.

The left and right faces (or the depth sides) of the bracket of column drum OD.D.2.CL.4 are decorated with the same composition that appears on element OD.D.2,CL.3 with only a slight difference; 108 instead of the band of metopes and monoglyphs there is a molding of a thinner semi-circular band in bas relief (pl. **143).** 109 Although an extensive part of the front of the bracket is weathered away, it is still possible to discern that it is ornamented with a different design than the other two sides. The top three registers are the same, but at the bottom there is a bas relief depiction of a horned four-legged animal in profile, possibly an ibex or a goat. The animal's head is raised as if it is grazing on the leaves of a tree or a bush

<sup>106</sup> In the final report of the excavation at Oboda, Negev did not indicate where these "bracketed" column drums were discovered. From several conversations conducted with Israel Antiquities Authority archaeologists Yoram Haimi, Dr. Tali Erickson-Gini and Dr. Peter Fabian, I learnt that Negev discovered these architectural elements in debris that were dumped, possibly after the abandonment of the site, in the water cistern located in the atrium of the North Church (plans 11 and 12). Dr. Peter Fabian further suggested the possibility that the brackets were used to support beams above the entrances leading form the atrium to the basilica of the church. Personal communication.

<sup>107</sup> Negev (1997), 120-121 (photo 176).

<sup>108</sup> Negev (1997), 120.

<sup>109</sup> It is interesting to note that on the top side of this bracket there is a rectangular depression 17x25.5cm in size. It is possible that this is a groove into which a beam would be fitted.

that is located to its right. The top of the plant and the area above it are eroded; therefore, it is impossible to determine what the relief in this area was depicting. At the right end of this scene there is a representation of what may be another small tree or a bush.<sup>110</sup>

The last "bracketed" column drum to be described, OD.D.2.CL.8, bears a different decoration than the previously described architectural elements (pl. 144). 111 The decoration is continuous and appears on all three sides of the bracket; it includes a smooth upright band at the top, and below it the face of the bracket slopes inwardly. This is followed by a "rope pattern" band in bas relief. The main part of the composition is taken up by a simplified representation of an arcade or possibly an *archosolia*. This part of the decoration is composed of hemispherical shapes carved in sunken relief. The two shorter sides of the bracket bear two such "arches" and on the front side there are two and a half "arches". The halved "arch" appears on the right as if the craftsman did not thoroughly plan the decoration before he started carving it. The bottom of the bracket is decorated with two graded "sunk fillets", the top one thinner than the bottom one.

It is significant to note that the first two "bracketed" column drums, OD.D.2. CL.3 and OD.D.2.CL.4, are decorated in a similar fashion and their style and workmanship bears a striking resemblance; conversely, column drum OD.D.2.CL.8 is decorated with a different, much simpler composition. Therefore, I would like to suggest the possibility that the first two column drums were decorated by the same artisan and that the third may have been decorated by a less accomplished craftsman, possibly an apprentice.

# 2.3.6 Capitals

The eight capitals documented at Oboda are all doorjamb capitals that bear geometric, floral and faunal decorations. These elements are carved as rectangular ashlars with one or two decorated, protruding, trapezoidal facets. The capitals are divided into three main stylistic categories: geometric compositions, floral compositions and faunal compositions. The capitals that make-up the geometric compositions category, are divided into further stylistic sub-categories: fillet moldings, fishbone pattern and star-like shapes in frames. All of the elements are described within

<sup>110</sup> Negev (1997), 120. Negev hesitantly suggests that the object in the middle of this scene might be a pot out of which emerges a wreath with an inscribed cross in its center (as opposed to the suggestion made here that it is a tree). Negev did not publish a photograph of this bracketed column drum and therefore it is impossible to determine if the preservation state of this element was better during the time that Negev prepared his publication.

<sup>111</sup> Negev (1997), 120.

their respective categories in order of complexity of design, from the simplest to the most elaborate.

## 2.3.6.1 Geometric Compositions

### 2.3.6.1.1 Fillet Moldings

Capital OD.J.CP.101 was unearthed in recent excavations conducted at the southwestern corner of the "Roman Quarter" (pl. 145, plan 16). 112 This element is a fragment of a doorjamb capital, but the decoration that appears on both of its trapezoidal facets is still visible. The ornamentation is different than that of the previously described capitals and consists of a series of architectural moldings. The decoration begins at top with an upright band and is followed by an undecorated area. A series of architectural moldings adorn the bottom half of the element. The sequence is of a thin torus, a fillet, a sunk fillet and a lower torus. The decoration ends 2.8m above the bottom edge of the element. It is interesting to note that although the quality of the workmanship of the decoration seems to be of a slightly higher quality than the previously described doorjamb capitals, it is the only one that originates from a domestic context.

#### 2.3.6.1.2 Fishbone Pattern

Capital OD.E.5.CP.45 was discovered in Negev's excavations in the debris of the basilica of the South Church (pl. 146). 113 The capital is carved as a rectangular ashlar with a protruding trapezoidal facet in its center. The decoration consists of a flat upright band at the top, below this band the face of the element slopes inwardly. The lower half of the trapezoidal facet is decorated. The composition is of two bands, the top one is twice as high as the bottom one. The top band bears a decoration of an engraved fishbone pattern. In the center of the band there is a vertical line engraved and another line is incised across the band horizontally. At the bottom of the composition, there is a fillet band that is also decorated with engraved lines that mimic the top half of the first band, giving the design a three dimensional quality.

### 2.3.6.1.3 Star-like Shapes in Frames

Four of the capitals are decorated with a similar design in which "star-like shapes in frames" are a dominant component. Doorjamb capitals OD.CP.29 and OD.CP.30

<sup>112</sup> The analysis of this doorjamb capital was made possible courtesy of the director of the excavations, Dr. Tali Erickson-Gini of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Excavation license number 6391/ 2012.

<sup>113</sup> Negev (1997), 147 (photo 236).

are currently located in the backyard of the Visitor's Center at the site (pls. 147–148). These two elements probably functioned as doorjamb capitals located on either side of the same entrance. They are roughly the same size and bear the same decorational composition. The decoration, which appears on both of the protruding trapezoidal facets, is carved in high relief, and consists of four decorated bands that are separated by deep triangular grooves. The top band contains "star-like shapes in frames", followed by two bands of a hollowed-out "zigzag" pattern; the bottom band is also composed of "star-like shapes in frames". The original location of these two elements is unknown.

The design of "star-like shapes in frames" is also dominant in the composition of the decoration of doorjamb capitals OD.E.1.CP.38 and OD.E.6.CP.39. 114 These two capitals are both located in the complex of the South Church. The former is restored as a capital in one of the entrances in the northwestern part of the complex; this may be the original location of the capital since the doorjamb capital on the opposite side of the same entrance bears traces of what appears to be a similar decoration. The latter capital is part of a pile of architectural elements located in one of the rooms north of the atrium. Capital OD.E.1.CP.38 has two decorated trapezoidal facets (pl. 149, plan 13). The decoration consists of a flat and upright band at the top, which is defined on the bottom, by a thin horizontal incision made by the artisan as a guideline. The face of the trapezoidal facet slopes inwardly, below this band, and is decorated at the top by a band of four "star-like shapes in frames". The "star-like shapes" are a very simplified version of this motif; instead of being carved in relief they are engraved by thin incisions. The mid-section of the trapezoidal facet is very weathered so it is impossible to discern any decoration in this part of the capital. At the bottom there are two bands that are semi-circular in section.

Capital OD.E.6.CP.39 also has two decorated protruding trapezoidal facets **(pl.150, plan 13)**. The decoration starts about 5cm from the top of the element with a "fillet" band. The main part of the composition is taken up by two rows of "starlike shapes in frames", carved in bas relief. At the bottom of the trapezoidal facets the decoration finishes with a band of four lozenge-shaped reels.

## 2.3.6.2 Floral Compositions

Capital OD.T.CP.46 is currently on display in the Visitor's Center at the site, but was originally discovered in a dwelling in the "Roman Quarter" on the acropolis (known as "Building T") **(pl. 151)**. This capital is decorated with a floral motif of naturalized palm branches set in-between a thin semi-circular band at the top, and a "rope pattern" band between two "fillets", at the bottom. The decoration is carved in bas relief. The front trapezoidal facet of the capital is decorated with two whole

<sup>114</sup> Negev (1997), 147 (photo 234).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. n. 5.

palmettes flanked on either side by a half palmette. On the narrower side of the element the trapezoidal facet bears one whole palmette, flanked by a half palmette on either side. 116

## 2.3.6.3 Faunal Compositions

Capital OD.E.5.CP.53 was discovered in Negev's excavations in the debris of the basilica of the South Church (pl. 152). 117 This element has two decorated protruding trapezoidal facets. In the center of the front trapezoidal facet there is a bas relief, stylized bird, with spread legs and wings. The head of the bird is in profile and is turned to the left. This could be a simplified depiction of a "Roman Eagle". The bottom of the trapezoidal facet is decorated with two fillets in high relief. The narrower trapezoidal facet is only decorated with two fillets at the bottom.

#### 2.3.7 Cornices

All of the cornices that were examined at Oboda originally functioned as part of engaged pilasters and the vast majority of them were carved out of limestone in the shape of upside-down regular trapezoids. It is interesting to note that no decorated cornices were observed in the "Roman Quarter" and, with the exception of one cornice, all of the elements in the assemblage are located in various rooms of the "Byzantine Dwelling". 118 The cornices have been divided into two main groups according to the composition of their decoration: single sunk fillet and double sunk fillets.

### 2.3.7.1 Single Sunk Fillet

The first group of cornices includes 11 items, which are all located in the "Byzantine Dwelling" (plans 11 and 15). They are all decorated with an upright and smooth band at the top of the element. The face of the cornice under this band slopes inwardly and is left undecorated until its bottom section, where there is a decoration of a sunk fillet. Cornices OD.C.1.CR.12 (pl. 153, plan 15) and OD.C.1.CR.13 (pl. 154,

<sup>116</sup> More commonly the veins of palm branches are engraved, but here they are carved in bas relief.

**<sup>117</sup>** Negev (1997), 146 (photo 231).

<sup>118</sup> The room numbers provided here where given in the field and, for the most part, do not correspond to the room numbers provided in Negev's final report. On plan 15 the room numbers that were used for the purposes of this study appear in blue, while the room number's that were given in the publication of the site appear in black.

**plan 15)** are located in Room 1 and are only decorated on their front side.<sup>119</sup> Cornices OD.C.5.CR.14, OD.C.5.CR.15, OD.C.5.CR.17, OD.C.5.CR.18, OD.C.5.CR.19 and OD.C.5.CR.20 are located in Room 5 **(pls. 155–160, plan 15)**. The first two elements in the previous list are decorated only on their front sides and the rest are also decorated on their depth sides. Cornices OD.C.4.CR.21, OD.C.4.CR.22 and OD.C.4.CR.23 are located in Room 4 and are also decorated on three sides **(pls. 161–163, plan 15)**. The heights and widths of all of the cornices vary, but the thicknesses of the sunk fillets are all between 2–2.5cm, on average.

An additional cornice, OD.E.2.CR.35 decorated with only one sunk fillet was documented in Room 2 of the South Church **(pl. 164, plan 13).** This element was carved in chalk and not in limestone, as opposed to the previously described elements. In contrast to the other cornices in the assemblage, it is carved as a rectangular ashlar with a protruding trapezoidal facet. These differences, between cornices located in one dwelling in the "Cave City", and an element from the acropolis, may indicate that one artisan carved the elements in the "Byzantine Dwelling" and a different one carved the cornice from the South Church.

### 2.3.7.2 Double Sunk Fillets

The second group of cornices includes four elements, all from the "Byzantine Dwelling". These cornices are decorated in a similar fashion to the cornices in the first group, but instead of one sunk fillet at the bottom of the element there are two graded sunk fillets. Cornice OD.C.1.CR.11 is located, out of its original location, in Room 1 as part of an engaged pilaster that is now incorporated into the construction of a wall (pl.165, plan 15), Cornices OD.C.7.CR.24 and OD.C.7.CR.25 are used as spolia in the construction of a wall in Room 7;<sup>122</sup> both of these cornices are decorated only on their front side (pls. 166-167, plan 15). Cornice OD.C.7.CR.26 is part of an engaged pilaster in the same room, and is decorated on three sides (pl. 168, plan 15). An additional element in Room 7 is cornice OD.C.7.CR.27, which is decorated with a different composition than the previously described cornices (pl. 169, plan 15). It is the widest cornice examined at the site. Instead of two sunk fillets at the bottom of the element there are two deep grooves, and it is possible that the decoration was created by a novice. Another possibility is that the grooves were part of the technique utilized in carving the sunk fillets; if this is indeed the case, then the decoration of this cornice was not completed.

<sup>119</sup> For a description of Room 5 in the "Byzantine Dwelling" see: Negev (1997), 159; Cornice OD.C.1. CR.13 was restored in this location.

<sup>120</sup> For a description of Room 2 in the "Byzantine Dwelling" see: Negev (1997), 160.

<sup>121</sup> For a description of Room 2 in the South Church see: Negev (1997), 138.

<sup>122</sup> For a description of Room 7 in the "Byzantine Dwelling" see: Negev (1997), 163.

#### 2.3.8 Arches

The sample of voussoirs that were documented at Oboda includes both segments of arches that supported ceilings and a voussoir that was part of an arch located above a niche. The arch segments from Oboda are divided into three stylistic categories: "rectangular frames and 'X's in rectangular frames", "zigzag pattern" and "dentils, rope pattern and zigzag pattern". The arch stones are described according to the complexity of their compositions.

## 2.3.8.1 Rectangular Frames and X's in Rectangular Frames

The first group, of four documented voussoirs, was unearthed in recent excavations at the southwestern corner of the "Roman Quarter". 123 These voussoirs were discovered in collapse inside a Byzantine period extension to a Roman period dwelling. Arch segments OD.J.AR.25, OD.J.AR.26, OD.J.AR.27 and OD.J.AR.28, were all carved of chalk. The decoration is simplistically engraved and appears on the bottom sides of the elements. Therefore, the ornamentation could have been viewed by looking up towards the ceiling of the room, Voussoirs OD, I, AR, 25 and OD, I, AR, 28 are decorated with an engraved rectangle that defines a frame approximately 3.5cm thick around the edges of the element (pls. 170-171). There are remnants of red paint in the incised lines that form this rectangle. Elements OD.J.AR.26 and OD.J.AR.27 are decorated in a similar fashion with the addition of an 'X' engraved in the center of the rectangle (pls. 172-173). There are remnants of red paint in the incised lines that form the rectangle and the 'X'. The decoration of the arch in its original form might have been composed of an alternating pattern composed of the two types of voussoirs.

Architectural elements discovered in debris of the South Church and bearing similar decorations have been published by Negev, who defined them simply as "buildings blocks". 124 These two elements are rectangular ashlars with a protruding, decorated rectangular facet. One of these "building blocks" has been documented in this study and is subsequently described.

### 2.3.8.2 Zigzag Pattern

Voussoir OD.E,3.AR.6 is one of four limestone arch segments that are located above a niche in the southeastern corner of the atrium of the South Church (pl. 174, plan 13). The total diameter of this small arch is 49.5cm. The eastern most youssoir was documented. It is the best preserved part of the arch. The top half of the voussoir is

<sup>123</sup> The analysis of these four voussoirs was made possible courtesy of the director of the excavations, Dr. Tali Gini-Erickson of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Excavation license number 6391/ 2012.

<sup>124</sup> Negev (1997), 148.

carved in bas relief and ends in the center of the element with a row of "zigzags". The "zigzag" pattern is followed by a horizontal band, triangular in section, defined by a deep groove below it. The bottom half of the front face of the voussoir is left undecorated. The other four segments of this small arch were decorated with a similar composition.

## 2.3.8.3 Dentils, Rope Pattern and Zigzag Pattern

The last three voussoirs were possibly part of the same arch. These are elements OD.D.3.AR.2, OD.D.4.AR.5 and OD.E.4.AR.7 (pls. 175–177). The three arch segments were all found in debris at different locations at the site, two in rooms belonging to the North Church complex and the third in the South Church. These voussoirs were grouped together because they were all carved in limestone and decorated with the same sequence of bas relief patterns and moldings. The decoration inhabits roughly the same proportions of the depth side of all three arch stones. The location of the decoration might be an indication that this was an arch that was located over a large entrance, as opposed to an arch that may have supported a ceiling, or a roof. The composition consists of a band of schematic dentils followed by a thin semicircular band, a rectangular fillet, an incised rope pattern band, two thin semicircular bands, and a band of zigzags, in bas relief. The small area at the bottom of the front face of the voussoir was left undecorated. It is interesting to note that on voussoirs OD.D.3.AR.2 and OD.E.4.AR.7 the incised diagonal lines forming the "rope pattern" band lean to the left, while on voussoir OD.D.4.AR.5 the incised diagonal lines lean to the right. This might be an indication that these elements are congruent, originally located at either side of the same arch.

### 2.3.9 Decorated Elements from Undefined Architectural Context

There are seven architectural elements in the assemblage of documented artifacts from Oboda that cannot be assigned to any of the previously described categories. However, one of these artifacts is located *in situ* and therefore can be classified as a building stone, five are rectangular ashlars of undefined architectural context, and one may have functioned as a voussoir. These elements are divided into two main stylistic categories on the basis of the most dominant motif in their decoration. The categories are: geometric compositions and rosette compositions. The geometric compositions category has been further divided into two sub-groups: "engraved 'x's" and "cross in relief".

### 2.3.9.1 Geometric Compositions

## 2.3.9.1.1 Engraved 'X's

A unique architectural element that may have functioned as a "building block" is item OD.E.6.UC.8 (pl. 178). 125 This is a rectangular ashlar with a protruding rectangular facet covering half of its front side. There are two thin engraved lines carved from one corner of the protruding facet to the other. The lines form an "X" shape and the grooves contain remnants of red paint.

### 2.3.9.1.2 Cross in Relief

Two rectangular ashlars in which the symbol of the cross is the main part of the decoration are OD.E.3.UC.7 and OD.UC.14 (pls. 179-180). The former, is a fragment of an architectural element whose original function cannot be defined, which was carved out of very porous limestone. In the center of this element part of a "Greek cross" with flared arms is carved in high relief. The latter architectural element mentioned here (OD.UC.14) was carved in chalk and bears a "Greek cross" with flared arms that inhabits the entire front face of the ashlar.

Architectural element OD.I.UC.22 is located above the stone that consolidates the arched northern entrance to the Byzantine Forth (pl. 181, plan 16). 127 In the center of this rectangular ashlar there is a "Greek cross" with flared arms, carved in bas relief. The cross is composed of a double frame made of two semi-circular bands. In each of the spaces between the arms of the cross Greek letters are carved in bas relief. These letters form monograms that bear a Christian symbolic meaning. In the upper left quarter – X, in the upper right quarter –  $M\Gamma$ , in the lower left quarter – A and in the lower right –  $\Omega$ . The location of this decorated architectural element above an entranceway to the fortress may be directly related to the possible protective magical qualities that the cross and monograms may have had in the eyes of the inhabitants of the site.

#### 2.3.9.2 Rosette Compositions

Architectural elements OD.E.3.UC.15<sup>129</sup> and OD.D.10.UC.13<sup>130</sup> are very similar in the style and workmanship of their decoration. Interestingly, the former was discovered in the debris of Room 10 in the complex of the North Church and the latter in the

<sup>125</sup> Negev (1997), 148 (photo 238).

<sup>126</sup> For element OD.UC.14 see: Negev (1997), 145 (photo 230).

**<sup>127</sup>** Negev (1997), 99 (photo 143).

<sup>128</sup> For several possible interpretations see: Negev (1981), 42 (photo 36); Nongbri (2011), 64-68.

<sup>129</sup> Negev (1997), 145 (photo228).

<sup>130</sup> Negev (1997), 121 (photo 177).

debris of the atrium in the South Church. 131 Element OD.E.3.UC.15 is carved in chalk and decorated with a six-petaled rosette is set within a circular frame (pl. 182). The frame around this center ornament is composed of a thin fillet on the top and bottom and a column of four "star-like shapes in frames" on either side. The area around the edges of the front face of the element is recessed, "pushing" the relief decoration to the forefront. In the final report of the excavations Negev refers to these types of rectangular ashlars as "building blocks", and indeed this may be the best suggestion that could be made as to the original function of this type of element. 132 Rectangular ashlar OD.D.10.UC.13 is carved in limestone and decorated in the center of its front side with a bas relief, six-petaled rosette, carved within a protruding circular facet (pl. 183). The petals of the rosette are in the shape of hollowed-out triangles and it is possible that it was carved with the aid of a compass. Around the rosette and following the contours of the edges of the element, there is a frame composed of "star-like shapes in frames". On the wider side of the element there are seven such "star-like shapes" and on the narrower, five. The frame protrudes from the face of the element.

The last element in the main category of decorated stones of undefined architectural context is item OD.UC.16 **(pl. 184)**. This is a fragmented rectangular ashlar with a slightly concave profile, resembling the shape of a voussoir. The concave face of the element is decorated with a high relief of a six-petaled rosette set within a medallion. The medallion is composed of a semi-circular band and shapes that mimic the shapes of the petals of the rosette around its inner contour. The contours of all the petals are further emphasized by deep engravings. The medallion is flanked on either side by two fish; the mouths of the fish are touching the outer frame of the medallion. Due to the poor preservation state of the element only a small part of the head of one of the fish is preserved, and the other fish is somewhat damaged. The better preserved fish is depicted in a naturalized style with thin engravings that mark the veins of its fins. There are some remnants of red paint that appear on the rosette and the fish.

<sup>131</sup> Negev suggests that both of these elements may have originated in the South Church with no clear explanation as to their suggested provenance. Neither one of the elements were discovered in situ.

**<sup>132</sup>** Negev (1997), 121, 145.

**<sup>133</sup>** Negev (1997), 87 (photo 129). Although this element was discovered in debris in the vestibule of the En-Nusra burial cave, which is dated to the Roman period, the style of this element seems more Byzantine than Roman, and therefore it was documented.

# 2.4 Mampsis

#### 2.4.1 Introduction

Mampsis is the eastern most Byzantine settlement within the Elusa Oikomene (plan 17). The site is located on the eastern margins of the Dimona valley, at the junction of the ancient Roman roads that led from the Negev Desert to the Aravah valley. These roads were a great catalyst in the development of the settlement during the second century CE from a caravan halt to one of the most prosperous villages in the Negev. According to A. Negev, who conducted extensive excavations at the site, the agricultural potential of the settlement was relatively small and covered only 105 acres. He suggests that the town's affluence was the result of its strategic location in the vicinity of an important crossroads.<sup>134</sup> During the Byzantine period the town gained further prosperity, which may account for the high taxes the residents paid, as noted in the Nessana papyri. 135

Mampsis is one of the smallest sites in the Negev with an area of 4.17ha. and is surrounded by a formidable wall. The settlement includes several public structures that were constructed before the Byzantine period, among them: a Khan – at the outskirts of the site, a bathhouse and a complex located roughly in the center of the site and currently identified as a souk or market place. Two additional public institutions were constructed during the Byzantine period, the East and the West Churches. The dwellings that have been excavated are larger than the average dwellings in other sites of this region and in two of the domestic structures stables were discovered. The Byzantine period saw a substantial increase in population in the Negev and various changes were made to the dwellings of Mampsis in order to accommodate for the demographic change. 136 Although the town saw great prosperity during the Late Roman and the Byzantine periods the numismatic evidence suggests that it was abandoned sometime during Justinian's reign, and it may have been the inability of the town's people to cope with the strain of raids that brought on the settlement's demise. 137

### 2.4.2 Bases and Podia

A sample of doorjamb bases and a column base from the northern and southern parts of the settlement were documented, as well as two bases from an unknown context. All the bases in the sample are decorated in a similar fashion with graded

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Elliott Jr. (1982), 115. Regarding the role of agriculture in Mampsis' economy.

**<sup>135</sup>** Negev (1988b), 3–7.

<sup>136</sup> Shereshevski (1991), 22-36.

<sup>137</sup> Negev (1988b), 3-7.

architectural moldings. It is possible that some of the doorjamb capitals that were studied are in fact doorjamb bases, but as they were not found *in situ* they were labeled, by default, as capitals. The carving of the bases demonstrates a level of precision and planning, and their style seems to belong more to the Roman than the Byzantine period. If indeed these bases belong to the Byzantine phase of construction at the site, than they may be evidence to an intermediate stylistic phase between the Roman and the Byzantine periods. Since the sample includes only five elements that bear stylistic similarities they were separated into two different groupings according to their architectural function and not according to the style of their decoration.

### 2.4.2.1 Doorjamb Bases

The four doorjamb bases are in fact two pairs of bases. The first, MP.E.1.BP.52 and MP.E.1.BP.53, were documented *in situ*, and are located on either side of the same entrance in a dwelling in the western part of the settlement (**pls. 185–186, plan 18**). The top third of the bases is comprised of a protruding undecorated rectangular facet. Below this facet there is a protruding trapezoidal section with an outwardly sloping face. This part of the base is decorated with alternating fillet, *torus* and *scotia* moldings. Two sides of the bases are decorated; the front side which would be seen as one enters the room and the depth side where the doorjamb is located. Although the two bases are almost certainly *in situ* and are part of the same doorway, their decorational compositions are not identical. The sequence of the moldings is different as well as the ratio between the undecorated part of the face of the element to the decorated part. A larger portion of base MP.E.1.BP.53 (about 14%) is decorated than the decorated area on base MP.E.1.BP.52.

The other two doorjamb bases, MP.BP.54 and MP.BP.55, were not documented *in situ*, but they are both decorated in a very similar fashion **(pls. 187–188)**. Although, in the present study a doorjamb base that is not discovered in its original archaeological context is by default defined as a capital, the overall shape and decoration of these two elements does not accommodate this "rule". The style of decoration of these elements is unlike any doorjamb capital that has been documented *in situ* at any of the other sites, but it is similar in some respects to the style of the previously described doorjamb bases. Bases MP.BP.54 and MP.BP.55 were discovered during Negev's excavations at the site in the debris of the courtyard of Building XII. At present these two bases are stored in one of the rooms of this

<sup>138</sup> Negev (1988a), 50-51 on the construction of Building I, where these bases are located and p. 66 for the description of the locus they belong to.

<sup>139</sup> Negev (1988b), 78 (photo 69).

**<sup>140</sup>** Building XII in Negev's final publication has been labeled as building A for the purposes of this study and appears in both plans 17 and 19 in the appendix.

building along with other architectural elements. 141 Both bases are decorated using the same composition of a protruding rectangular facet above a protruding trapezoidal facet. The face of the trapezoidal facet slopes outwards and is decorated with a succession of torus and fillets moldings. As opposed to the previously described doorjamb bases, these two elements were decorated with an identical composition and the deviation between the two bases of the ratios of the rectangular facet to the trapezoidal facet is only about five percent.

### 2.4.2.2 Column Base

One round limestone column base was documented. Base MP.A.2.BP.51 is located in the courtyard of Building XII and is decorated with graded and alternating torus and scotia rings (pl. 189, plan 19). 142 At the top of the base there is an upright band, followed by a torus molding and a scotia molding. At the bottom of this sequence there is another torus molding.

### 2.4.3 Doorjambs

A sample of five doorjambs was documented. Three of the doorjamb fragments may have originated from the same entrance and the rest are from various locations at the site. At Mampsis, the entrances that were preserved and ornamented were decorated with doorjamb capitals and bases, and at times, their architraves were also adorned with reliefs and various types of engravings. Decorated doorjambs can be found both in private homes and ecclesiastical buildings. The five doorjamb fragments can be divided into two groups: doorjambs that were decorated with engravings and doorjambs that were decorated with reliefs.

### 2.4.3.1 Engraved Compositions

Doorjambs MP.A.4.DJ.7 and MP.C.DJ.9 originated from private dwellings. 143 Doorjamb MP.A.4.DJ.7 is located, in situ, in Building XII (pl. 190, plan 19). It is a rectangular ashlar with a protruding rectangular facet, in bas relief, located on the right half of the front face of the element. On the protruding facet there is a decoration consisting of an engraving of a thin incised line that forms a border around the inside contour of the facet. This border is 2.5cm thick on average. The area inside this engraved rectangle is divided, by incisions, into two additional rectangles, separated by a border, one on top of the other. The area inside each of these rectangles

<sup>141</sup> Negev (1988b), 81, 84 (Fig. 4).

<sup>142</sup> Negev (1988a), 132-133. Regarding locus 413, where this column base is located.

<sup>143</sup> For a paralleling element see Negev (1988b), 91, 108 (Fig. 8).

is covered with thin, close-knit diagonal engravings. This decoration also appears on the narrower side of the element where the doorjamb would have been. A similar type of ornamentation also appears on arch segment MP.A.3.AR.29, located in the stables of Building XII.

Doorjamb MP.C.DJ.9 is located in a pile of collapsed stones, just south of an unexcavated dwelling complex, west of the complex marked as the Souk in Negev's final report (**pl. 191**). The element is identified as a doorjamb on the basis of its shape and a depression in its narrower side that may have held a door hinge. The decoration consists of a bas relief, protruding rectangular facet, in the center of the front face of the element. There are two intersecting diagonal lines in the form of the letter X that dominate the face of the protruding facet.

### 2.4.3.2 Relief Compositions

Doorjambs MP.DJ.1, MP.DJ.2 and MP.DJ.3 are currently stored in one of the rooms of Building XII together with other architectural elements (**pls. 192–193**). These three elements are decorated with the same sequence of architectural moldings. A comparison of the measurements of these moldings reveals that the differences between their widths, on all of these doorjambs, are only of a few millimeters. Therefore, it is highly probable that they formed a sequence of segments from the same architrave. The decoration covers half or nearly a half of the rectangular ashlar and consists of a protruding rectangular facet in bas relief. Roughly in the center of this facet there is a vertical band in sunken relief. This band is triangular in section. A similar element, discovered in the debris of the West Church, was published in Negev's final report of the site, and on this basis it could be suggested that these elements may have originated in one of the doorways from this church's complex. 144

### 2.4.4 Lintels

The eight lintels that were documented, two of them *in situ*, can be divided into three groups on the basis of their decorational compositions and the dominant motifs that appear in them. This division is created either with consideration of the entire composition, or just part of it, in those cases where the lintels are fragmented and broken. The three stylistic categories are: "crosses", "wheel-spoke rosettes", "solar disks and crosses" and "varia".

#### 2.4.4.1 Crosses

Three lintels are decorated with compositions in which the cross is either the sole motif or the most dominant one. They will be presented from the most minimalistic to the most complex. The first is fragmented lintel MP.D.2.LT.47, which was discovered during Negey's excavations, in debris (pl. 195). The lintel is decorated with what appears to be a single ornament of a Greek cross with thin slightly flared arms. Although the lintel is broken it is likely that the cross was engraved in its center.

The second lintel in this sub-category is item MP.D.2.LT.46 (pl. 196). The lintel is partially broken, and is also decorated with a single motif in its center. Here, the decoration consists of a Greek cross with straight arms; but as opposed to the previous lintel it is craved in bas relief and set within a frame of two medallions. The inner medallion composed of a bas relief band, and the outer of a sunken relief band.146

The last lintel in the "cross" sub-category is element MP.A.5.LT.44 (pl. 197, plan 19). This lintel is located *in situ* in the eastern part of Building XII. 147 The dominant motif in the decoration is a "Greek cross" with flared arms. The cross is formed in shallow sunken relief and is surrounded by a medallion composed of a sunken relief band. There are visible remnants of red paint within the right arm of the cross and the medallion that surrounds it. The cross is flanked by schematically engraved palm branches. There are some remnants of red paint in the grooves forming the right palm branch. The workmanship of the palm branches seems to be quite simplified in comparison to the cross ornament in the center of the lintel.

## 2.4.4.2 Wheel-Spoke Rosettes, Solar Disks and Crosses

This sub-category includes four lintels that are decorated with either one, or a combination of at least two, of the motifs listed in the title. Two of the lintels are broken, and two are complete, one of these is located in situ. The first three lintels to be described are decorated in a stylistically similar ornamentation and it may be suggested that they were carved by the same artisan or created in the same workshop.

The first element in this group, MP.LT.4, is currently located at the Israel Antiquities Authority storeroom (pl. 198). 148 It is a small fragment of a lintel decorated with a schematic depiction of a column and a "wheel-spoke" rosette set in a medallion, both in high relief. Only a small portion of the lintel was preserved and therefore the complete composition cannot be described.

**<sup>145</sup>** Negev (1988b), 90, 91 (Fig. 8).

<sup>146</sup> There appears to be an additional sunken relief carving to one side of the cross ornament, but it is either a very abstract or unfinished motif or a natural break in the stone.

<sup>147</sup> Negev (1988b), 91, 92 (Fig. 8).

<sup>148</sup> Negev (1988b), 99 (photo 109).

One of the complete lintels in this sub-category is lintel MP.LT.35. This element was not documented *in situ* (**pl. 199**). The composition of the decoration of this lintel consists of a protruding rectangle that takes up the center area of the front of the lintel. This rectangular facet is decorated with a bas relief of a solar disk motif. At the bottom of the center of the solar disk there is a semi-circular shape from which radiating bands are carved in a hemi-spherical formation. The solar disk is framed by a bas relief band around its contour. On either side of the solar disk there are bas relief "Greek crosses" with straight arms that are set within solid, protruding, bas relief and round disks.

Lintel MP.LT.34 is also not located *in situ* and is decorated with a similar, although more complex composition than the previously described lintel **(pl. 200)**. The lintel is broken off at its right end, but the composition is nearly complete and was most likely symmetrical. The decoration consists of a protruding rectangular facet decorated from left to right with: a schematic depiction of a column in high relief, a "Greek cross" with straight arms in a "rope pattern medallion", a "wheelspoke" rosette in a "rope pattern medallion" and in the center, a partially preserved "solar disk". Most of the right side of the composition was not preserved.

The last lintel in this sub-category is MP.A.7.LT.45, located *in situ* at the entrance to a room at eastern part of Building XII **(pl. 201, plan 19).** <sup>151</sup> The lintel is ornamented in its center with a compass made "Greek cross" with flared arms. The cross is set in a medallion carved in sunken relief and the areas between the arms of the cross form a four petaled rosette with the petal's tips engraved beyond the outline of the medallion. The center ornament is flanked by two "solar disks" created in sunken relief. Although the composition of the decoration can be said to be similar to the one on the lintels previously discussed the workmanship appears to be quite different and somewhat more refined.

## 2.4.4.3 Varia

Lintel MP.LT.15 is quite unique in the subject and style of its decoration and may be an example of an element that was created during the time of the transformation of the site from a pagan to a Christian settlement (**pl. 202**). The ornaments were carved in high relief and from left to right are: a schematic horned altar, a six petaled rosette set in a sunken medallion within a square protruding facet, a depiction of a figure within a niche, and a schematic knot of Hercules. It is interesting to note that normally lintels bear an odd number of ornaments, most frequently three, set

<sup>149</sup> Negev (1988b), 98-99 (photo 105).

<sup>150</sup> Negev (1988b), 97, 99 (Fig. 10).

<sup>151</sup> Negev (1988b), 92 (photo 90).

<sup>152</sup> Negev (1988b), 86-87 (photo 81).

in a symmetrical array, whereas this lintel seems to have been decorated with a composition of four motifs.

#### 2.4.5 Columns

Two decorated column drums (MP.CL.12 and MP.CL.13) were documented at Mampsis (pls. 203-204); both of these elements were discovered in Negev's excavations of the site, in the debris of Building XII. 153 Frequently, columns were plastered and the column drums were therefore left unadorned; in other instances, some of the drums constituting a column were decorated by a lathe decoration of thin engravings around the circumference of the element. The column drums in Mampsis are somewhat atypical, both in their shape and in their ornamentation. Both of the drums are relatively short and their heights are approximately 13.5cm, each. The decoration on both of these elements is similar and is composed of two thin margins at the top and the bottom of the drum, which are defined by thin horizontal grooves. The margins are about 3cm thick, on average. Between these margins there are rectangular blocks, also defined by thin grooves. Each of the rectangular blocks was completely covered by thin, close-knit, diagonal engravings.

These two column drums are a sample from additional column drums that were discovered roughly in the same location and are ornamented in a similar fashion. It is worthwhile noting that the decoration of these column drums bears similarities to the decoration of arch segment MP.A.3.AR.29 and doorjamb MP.A.4.DJ.7, both of which were discovered in situ in Building XII. Although these elements are all from the same dwelling, they originate from different locations within this large structure.

## 2.4.6 Capitals

The assemblage of documented capitals at Mampsis is composed entirely of doorjamb capitals. There are 21 items in this group, of which only one is located in situ; two are currently located at the Israel Antiquities Authority storerooms; and the rest are part of a collection of architectural elements located in one of the rooms of Building XII. Doorjamb capitals and bases are at times interchangeable, and the identification of an element as a base or as a capital, depends mostly on a composition that could only be set in one direction. Five of the elements that were not discovered in situ are identified with great probability as capitals according to their decorations and the rest could have also functioned as doorjamb bases. All of the capitals, with one exception, are rectangular ashlars with a protruding facet in the

<sup>153</sup> For parallels to both of these column drums see Negev (1988b), 84-85 (Fig. 6).

shape of a regular trapezoid on their front side. Quite frequently at the top of the trapezoidal facet there will be a flat and upright band and below it, the decorated face of the facet will slope inwardly, occasionally ending before the bottom of the element. At times one of the depth sides of the capital is also in the shape of a trapezoid. The capitals have been divided into three main categories and four subcategories according to the dominant motifs in their decoration.

## 2.4.6.1 Geometric Compositions

## 2.4.6.1.1 Upright Bands and Sunken Fillets

Doorjamb capitals MP.CP.96, MP.CP.83 and MP.CP.74 are decorated in a minimalistic fashion with upright bands and sunken fillets. <sup>154</sup> Capital MP.CP.96 is decorated both on the front and the depth sides of its protruding trapezoidal facet with an upright band at the top and a single sunken fillet at the base of the element **(pl. 205)**. Capitals MP.CP.74 and MP.CP.83 are decorated with a similar composition to that previously described, with the exception that near the bases of these capitals there are two graded sunken fillets and not one **(pls. 206–207)**. Capital MP.CP.74 has a protruding trapezoidal facet decorated both on the front and the depth sides. The shape of capital MP.CP.83 is somewhat different; its trapezoidal facet protrudes from the center of a rectangular ashlar and therefore is only decorated on its front side.

## 2.4.6.1.2 Upright Band, Sunken Fillet and Cylindrical Molding

There are seven capitals (MP.CP.79, MP.CP.80, MP.CP.82, MP.CP.91, MP.CP.92, MP. CP.93 and MP.CP.95) that are decorated with the same composition **(pls. 208–214).** Although, none of the capitals in this group are located *in situ* and their states of preservation are varied, the similarities in the decoration are quite clear and therefore they will be described collectively.

The overall shape of the capital consists of a rectangular ashlar with a protruding trapezoidal facet in its center (or roughly in its center). The trapezoidal facet is decorated with a flat and smooth band at the top and at the bottom, near the base of the capital, with a sunk fillet in the center of which there is a slightly sunken cylindrical molding. In the center of most of the cylindrical moldings there is a thin vertical incision which was probably the artisan's mark as part of the planning of the dressing of the stone. The heights of the bands are fairly regular, 3.7cm on average, and their lengths vary according to the widths of the trapezoidal facets. The widths of the semi-circular moldings range from 5.3cm to 6.15cm, without any clear

<sup>154</sup> See parallels for capitals MP.CP.74 and MP.CP.83 in Negev (1988b), 85-87 (Fig. 6).

**<sup>155</sup>** See parallel for capital MP.CP.82 in Negev (1988b), 89, 104 (Fig. 7). Parallels for capitals MP. CP.91, MP.CP.92, MP.CP.93 and MP.CP.95 in Negev (1988b), 89, 93, 104 (Fig. 7).

correlation to the widths of the trapezoidal facets. It is interesting to note that the front sides of capitals MP.CP.92 and MP.CP.93 are rectangular but the backs are semicircular as if they were cut from re-used column drums.

#### 2.4.6.1.3 Crosses

Capitals MP.CP.110, MP.CP.94 and MP.CP.20 are grouped together because they are all ornamented with a cross as a significant component in their decorational composition. 156 The style of the crosses appearing on these three capitals and the level of workmanship varies. Capital MP.A.6.CP.110 is the only capital in this group that is located in situ (pl. 215, plan 19). The decoration is composed of incised lines and parts of it appear to be carved by free hand with no concern for producing straight lines. The main part of the composition is made of a cross composed of two thin, intersecting rectangles that form the horizontal and vertical arms of the cross. At the bottom of the trapezoidal facet there is an incised band of a "zigzag pattern".

Capital MP.CP.94 is decorated, unlike most architectural elements in the assemblage, with a Latin cross as opposed to a Greek cross (pl. 216). The capital is shaped as a rectangular ashlar with a protruding trapezoidal facet located on its right side. At the top of the facet there is a flat, smooth and upright band and most of its face is decorated with a Latin cross with thin arms that are flared at their ends. The cross is carved in sunken relief.

The last element in this sub-category is doorjamb capital MP.CP.20, which is currently located at the Israel Antiquities Storerooms (pl. 217). The top half of the protruding trapezoidal facet of the capital is decorated with fillet, torus, and horizontal bands that are triangular in section, all in high and bas relief. The bottom half of the protruding facet is dominantly decorated by a carved high relief of a Greek cross. The arms of the cross are composed of two adjacent bands that are triangular in section.

# 2.4.6.1.4 Sequences of Moldings

A group of six capitals (MP.CP.75, MP.CP.76, MP.CP.77, MP.CP.81, MP.CP.89 and MP.CP.90) is decorated with a more complex composition of moldings. 157 The types of moldings are: fillets, torus, scotia, ovolo, "rope pattern" and "zigzag" bands. The moldings are mostly carved in bas relief, but at times are also made in mid-relief and sunken relief, or by engraving. There are no similarities in the compositions on any of the capitals belonging to this group, aside from the slightly more complex design and the fact that the decoration covers the entire face of the protruding

<sup>156</sup> For MP.CP.20 Negev (1988b), 88 (photo 86). For MP.CP.94 Negev (1988b), 79, 94 (Fig.3).

<sup>157</sup> For capital MP.CP.75 - Negev (1988b), 91-92 (Fig. 8). For capital MP.CP.81 - Negev (1988b), 111-112 (Fig. 14). For MP.CP.89 Negev (1988b), 87 (photo 82). For capital MP.CP.90 - Negev (1988b), 79, 84 (Fig. 3).

trapezoidal facet. The elements will be described from the minimalistic to the more complex.

Capital MP.CP.75 is decorated with graded fillet moldings in bas relief and a slightly convex band in sunken relief with a thin horizontal line running across its center. This incision was probably made by the artisan in order to carve out this molding symmetrically (pl. 218). This capital is decorated continuously on its front and right depth sides. Another capital that is decorated with a sequence of fillet moldings and bands is MP.CP.90 (pl. 219). This capital has one decorated protruding trapezoidal facet that ends a relatively large distance from the bottom edge of the element – 8.4cm. The composition of the decoration includes a sequence of fillets, concave and convex bands. All of these moldings and the surface of the ashlar around them are finely dressed. Another doorjamb capital of a similar quality is element MP.CP.89 (pl. 220). This capital is decorated on both sides of its trapezoidal facet with several graded fillets of varying thicknesses. Towards the top of the trapezoidal facet a convex band of a "rope pattern" motif is carved. The trapezoidal facets terminate above the base of the capital.

The quality of workmanship of the first three capitals to be described stands in contrast to the rougher and duller reliefs of the following capitals. Doorjamb capital MP.CP.77 is decorated at the top of the composition with a flat and smooth band followed by a thick slightly concave band, a shallow fillet and a slightly convex band (pl. 221). The area below the top sequence is left mostly undecorated. Towards the bottom of the trapezoidal facet there are two additional slightly convex bands, the top one thicker than the bottom one. All of the different elements of the composition are separated and defined by deep, thin horizontal grooves. Capital MP.CP.76 is similarly decorated with a sequence of fillet and slightly convex moldings in bas relief as well as a very schematic "rope pattern" band (pl. 222).

The overall shape of MP.CP.81 is somewhat different than that of the previously described capitals (**pl. 223**). At the top of the trapezoidal facet there is a flat fillet band bearing an engraving of the Christian acronym  $IX\Theta YC$ .<sup>158</sup> The main part of the composition is taken up by a thick convex band, followed at the bottom by a band of "zigzag pattern" in bas relief.

## 2.4.6.2 Floral Composition

A single doorjamb capital is decorated with a floral design. Capital MP.CP.84 is ornamented with a composition of an engraved whole palmette flanked on either side by two half palmettes (**pl. 224**).<sup>159</sup> The palmettes are leaf shaped and their outlines are framed by two paralleling grooves that are set apart. Traces of red paint that are

<sup>158</sup> Negev (1988b), 112.

<sup>159</sup> Negev (1988b), 90, 92 (photo 89).

visible in the grooves forming the decoration indicate that the palmettes were probably painted.

#### 2.4.6.3 Varia

The final doorjamb capital to be described is capital MP.CP.78 (pl. 225). 160 This element is unique not just at Mampsis but in the entire assemblage of documented capitals from the Negev. The protruding facet of this element is in the shape of an upside-down triangle as opposed to the usual trapezoidal shape. At the top of the facet there is an upright band bordered at its bottom by a thin horizontal groove, possibly the craftsman's guideline. Below this band the face of the protruding triangular facet begins to slope inwardly. This is the only ornamentation of the capital.

According to the varying levels of workmanship and styles with which the capitals from this site have been dressed, it is suggested that they were not carved by the same hand and may even belong to different phases of construction.

## 2.4.7 Cornices

Three cornices (MP.CR.46, MP.CR.60 and MP.D.1.CR.61) were documented at the site, of which only one is located in situ. Typically cornices are ashlars that are carved in the form of upside-down regular trapezoids. The shape of cornice MP. CR.46 is somewhat unusual. It is carved as a rectangle and has a protruding trapezoidal facet (pl. 226). This element was defined as a cornice because the trapezoidal facet takes up most of the front side of the element and the overall shape of the ashlar is wider than a doorjamb capital would be. The trapezoidal facet is undecorated aside from a flat, smooth and upright band at its top.

Cornice MP.D.1.CR.61 is the only item, of the three that were documented, that is still located in situ, as part of an engaged pilaster in a dwelling (pl. 227, plan 20). The overall shape of the cornice is trapezoidal and it is decorated on three sides. The decoration covers the entire face of the cornice from top to bottom and is composed of: a flat and upright band, a very obtuse cyme reversa molding, and starting at the center of the element, three graded fillets in bas relief.

The last cornice in this category, element MP.CR.60, was not discovered in situ (pl. 228). It is trapezoidal in shape and similarly to the previously described cornice is decorated on three facets. The decoration is similar on all three sides and consists of a flat and upright band defined at the bottom by a thin horizontal groove; perhaps the craftsman's guideline. Below this band the face of the cornice slopes inwardly and towards the bottom of the element there is a band of "zigzag pattern". The band is carved in sunken relief in relation to the face of the cornice, but the upside-down triangles that form the pattern are in bas relief.

#### 2.4.8 Arches

Two typical arch stones were documented from two different areas at the site. These elements are both decorated mainly with engravings, but with quite different compositions. The first voussoir, MP.A.3.AR.29, is located in the structure marked as Building XII by Negev (pl. 229, plan 19). 161 It is part of a reconstructed arch located in the northwestern corner of the section of the building identified as the stable. 162 The arch segment is wedge-shaped, carved of chalky-limestone and decorated on two sides - the bottom of the voussoir and one of the narrower sides. The opposing narrow side of the voussoir is covered by visible hewing marks, but no decoration is visible. On the bottom of the voussoir the decoration consists of two rectangular areas, one next to the other. The entire face of these rectangles is covered with diagonal grooves. The contour of the rectangles is formed by thin incised lines that intersect at their meeting place between the two shapes. The narrow side of the voussoir, which faces the back wall of the stable, is decorated in a similar, minimalistic fashion, by a rectangle with a contour formed by thin incisions. The entire face of the rectangle is covered by rows of small, round depressions that may have been made by the use a pointed chisel and a hammer.

The second voussoir, MP.F.1.AR.30, is located in Building XVI as it is defined in the final excavation report **(pl. 230)**. It is located among other collapsed architectural elements on the floor of one of the rooms of the building. The arch segment is made of chalky limestone and is only decorated on its bottom side. The decorational composition consists of a vertical slightly convex band that protrudes in bas relief at the center of the element. In the center of the band there is a thin groove; probably a mark made by the artisan in the planning the decoration. This ornament is flanked on either side by two triangles. The apexes of the triangles are truncated by the slightly convex band. The contour of the triangles is made of thin grooves and their face is inhabited by randomly placed hammered, somewhat oval shaped, dots. There are some remnants of red paint on various parts of the decorated face of the element. It is interesting to note that the composition of this decoration is somewhat similar to the composition on an element that may have been a lintel (MP.C.2. UC.31, pl. 231), located in a private residence in the center of the site (Unit C – **plan 21**). The difference between the two compositions is in the central ornament. In the

**<sup>161</sup>** Negev (1988a), 111–162.

<sup>162</sup> Negev (1988a), 133-141. Regarding the excavation of the stable.

**<sup>163</sup>** Negev (1988a), 195. Regarding the partial excavation of building XVI. See Negev (1988b), 91 (Fig. 8), 94, for a description of a paralleling element.

middle of the composition of the element MP.C.2.UC.31 there is an engraving in sunken relief of a cross, to be subsequently described.

#### 2.4.9 Decorated Elements from an Undefined Architectural Context

The architectural elements that are grouped in this category are all items that could not be defined on the basis of their shape, decoration or location at the site. Although it was not possible to include them with any certainty in any of the previously discussed groups, when possible, suggestions have been made regarding their likely architectural function.

#### 2.4.9.1 Possible Lintels

Element MP.C.2.UC.31 is located in situ within an unexcavated dwelling complex west of the "Souk" (pl. 231, plan 21). This elongated rectangular ashlar is placed above what may be an entrance to a subterranean level of the dwelling and therefore may be a lintel. 164 The decoration of this element consists of a sunken relief Greek cross with flared arms in its center. The cross is flanked by two engraved triangles, both pointing towards the horizontal arms of the cross. The area within the triangles is fully populated by shallow, hammered depressions. The decoration of this element is somewhat reminiscent of the decoration of arch segment MP.F.1.AR.30.

Element MP.B.UC.35 is currently reconstructed as part of the doorjamb of one of the entrances to the East Church (pl. 232, plan 22). In the final excavation report Negev notes that this element was discovered in the debris of Building IV and identifies it as a fragment of a lintel. 165 The overall shape of this ashlar in similar to other fragments of lintels that were discovered at the site. Therefore, the current restored location of this element is very misleading and with high probability does not pertain to its original function and provenience within the site. The element is decorated with a high relief of a relatively wide semi-circular molding and a medallion composed of a schematic "rope pattern" band. The area within the medallion is inhabited by a type of a "wheel-spoke" rosette with thin radiating spokes. In the center of the rosette there is a hemispherical boss. The lower half of the decoration is only partially preserved.

## 2.4.9.2 Possible Arch Segments

Elements MP.UC.11 and MP.UC.28 are both rectangular ashlars that are slightly concave and hence may have functioned as arch segments. The style with which these

<sup>164</sup> The only way to determine if indeed this dwelling has such an underground floor would be to conduct further excavations at the site.

<sup>165</sup> Negev (1988b), 88 (photo 85).

two elements are decorated is not typical of the way arch stones are ornamented and for this reason they are not identified conclusively as voussoirs. Item MP.UC.11 is decorated on the concave face of the ashlar with a high relief of a fish in profile with a small triangular tail, a gaping mouth and an engraved eye and fin **(pl. 233)**. <sup>166</sup> Element MP.UC.28 is also decorated on the concave face of the ashlar. The decoration consists of two engraved rosettes set in a medallion **(pl. 234)**. <sup>167</sup> The rosettes are separated by a vertical band which is somewhat convex and has vertical grooves along its length. One of the rosettes is a "six petaled rosette" with thin lozenge shaped petals and the other is a "four petaled rosette" with the space between the petals forming a Greek cross with flared arms. The high relief decoration of the former element and the complexity of the design of the composition of the latter, are not found on other arch segments that have been discovered *in situ* at the site.

## 2.4.9.3 Rectangular Ashlars of Undefined Architectural Context

Architectural elements MP.UC.5, MP.UC.6, MP.UC.25 and MP.UC.26 are all rectangular ashlars bearing a similar decoration of a "six petaled rosette" with lozenge shaped petals, in either high or bas relief. The composition on elements MP.UC.5, MP.UC.25 and MP.UC.26 is of a rosette set in a medallion composed of a slightly convex band, while in element MP.UC.6 the rosette is set in a sunken medallion set within a protruding square facet (pls. 235–238). It appears that all of the rosettes and medallions were created with the aid of a compass.

Two additional rectangular ashlars that belong to this group, on the basis of their shape and size, are elements MP.UC.33 and MP.UC.34. Although, architectural element MP.UC.34 is also decorated in high relief with a medallion inhabited by a six petaled rosette, it is not grouped with the previously discussed elements (**pl. 239**). The style of the decoration of this element is quite different. The rosette takes up the entire area within the high relief single band medallion. The petals are composed of thick high relief bands. They are narrow, lozenge-shaped, with a deep thin groove in their center. The areas between the petals are triangular in the tips of the petals are joined together by straight high relief bands. MP.UC.34 is also decorated with a short band of beads-and-reels that was located above or below the medallion; depending on the way in which this element was positioned in its original context.

Element MP.UC.33 is decorated in high relief with a composition of a *chrismon* set within a medallion made of a "rope pattern" band **(pl. 240).**<sup>170</sup> The letter *Chi* is

<sup>166</sup> Negev (1988b), 86 (photo 80).

<sup>167</sup> Negev (1988b), 91, 94 (Fig. 8).

**<sup>168</sup>** For MP.UC.6 see Negev (1988b), 91–92, 94 (Fig. 8). For MP.UC.25 see Negev (1988b), 86 (photo 79).

<sup>169</sup> Negev (1988b), 99 (photo 106).

<sup>170</sup> Negev (1988b), 94-95 (photo 94).

symbolized by a Greek cross and the letter Rho appears in the upper right quarter created by the arms of the cross. In the remaining three quarters there are reliefs of the Greek letter X (Chi) – one in each guarter within the medallion.

The elements in this group that are published in the final excavation report of the site are either identified as segments of engaged pilasters or as voussoirs. Since there are no in situ examples of similarly shaped elements that are decorated in the same manner, which function as segments of engaged pilasters or arches, it might be prudent to reconsider this suggestion.

The last item belonging to this group of rectangular architectural elements from an unidentified context is element MP.UC.27 (pl. 241). 171 It may have been a lintel of a relatively small opening, such as a window. The decoration consists of a high relief frame around the top, left and right sides of the element. In the center of the framed area there is an engraving of a Greek cross with thin arms that are flared at their ends. There is a possibility that the cross in the center of the element was engraved at a later date than the original carving of this artifact.

### 2.5 Nessana

#### 2.5.1 Introduction

Nessana is located 52km southwest of Be'er Sheva and more specifically, southeast of Nahal Nessana (plan 23). The settlement stretches over approximately 17ha, with Nahal Ezuz, a branch of Nahal Nessana, dividing it into two parts; a lower town on the east and an acropolis to its west. The settlement was originally a Nabatean caravansary, during the second century BCE. The archaeological evidence indicates that the settlement prospered until the first century CE and then experienced a period of decline and possible abandonment until the Byzantine period, when the settlement gained renewed affluence. The site contains not only archaeological remains, but also modern buildings that were constructed both in the area of the acropolis and the lower town. These structures were constructed by the Turks who turned this site into the main base from which they launched their attack on the Suez Canal in 1916. The materials that were used in the construction of these early twentieth century structures came partially from the debris of the ancient site and thus caused damage to the archaeological remains.

The first major excavations that were held at Nessana were conducted by the Colt Expedition between 1935 and 1937. The expedition excavated two churches and a Byzantine fort, located on the acropolis. The southern of the two churches, known as the church of St. Mary, was a basilica with a chapel and an atrium. The

<sup>171</sup> Negev (1988b), 91, 94 (Fig. 8).

northern church on the acropolis, also known as the church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, was also constructed as a basilica with a baptistery, a chapel and a complex of rooms. In both churches the Cold Expedition discovered archives of papyri, written mostly in Greek and containing both literary and non-literary documents. These were published by the expedition in two separate volumes and from these papyri the ancient name of the settlement was learnt. Below the church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus the expedition revealed the remains of a Hellenistic fortress and to its south the remains of a Byzantine fort. The study of the non-literary papyri brought forth the suggestion that a mounted military unit called the "the very loyal Theodosians" inhabited the fort. The papyri also mention that the soldiers were residents of the village of Nessana.

The second major excavation at the site was conducted by Ben-Gurion University of the Negev between 1987 and 1995 under the direction of Prof. D. Urman, with Dr. J. Shereshevski and Prof. D. E. Groh as co-directors. The Ben-Gurion University expedition conducted soundings in the fort, the church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus and near St. Mary's church. This expedition also excavated new areas both on the acropolis and in the "lower town", unearthing the long staircase that ran down the slope of the acropolis and connected the two parts of the settlement. The excavations on the acropolis revealed a previously unknown monastery complex (known as the Northern Monastery) and three dwelling complexes dated to the end of the Byzantine and the Early Islamic periods. One of the dwelling complexes was defined by Urman as the "Priest House" on the basis of its proximity to St. Mary's church, its plan and other archaeological finds. The excavations also concentrated on a section of the slope of the southwestern ridge of the upper town, where a residential complex was unearthed, with an occupation date between the sixth and ninth centuries CE. In addition, the excavations uncovered a large church complex, known as the Central Church in the lower town. Southeast of this church the excavation of a stately home was began, but not completed.

The Nessana papyri and the archaeological excavations provide a great insight into the livelihood of the inhabitants of the settlement. Four of the Nessana papyri mention vineyards and it is clear that wine was produced also for exportation via the port at Gaza. Other fruits that were cultivated for commercial purposes were dates and olive. The Nessana papyri also mention the cultivation of figs, pomegranates and almonds, the remains of which were also discovered in archaeological excavations. Grain was also an important crop and although barley is a hardier grain the papyri indicate that wheat was far more popular. In addition to the cultivation of crops, pastoralism was part of the subsistence economy and included camel breeding, and the raising of goats and sheep. The Nessana papyri also mention two physicians, a goldsmith, an architect and a building contractor. The Ben-Gurion

<sup>172</sup> Casson and Hettich (1950); Kraemer (1958).

University excavations also focused on two farmsteads located at the outskirts of the site which revealed that runoff agriculture was practiced. 173

The decorated architectural elements described in this sub-chapter are currently stored at the laboratories of the department of Bible, Archaeology and Near East Studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Some of the elements were previously published by Prof. Urman and were re-examined for the purposes of this study, while others have not been published before.

#### 2.5.2 Bases

This group includes five decorated doorjamb bases, all carved in chalk. The bases have one protruding decorated trapezoidal facet. The widths of the ashlars vary, but their heights are fairly regular, between approximately 26-27cm. It is possible that they were all hewn contemporaneously, but the styles of the decoration are not always similar. It is interesting to note that these bases are among the most ornate doorjamb bases in the assemblage; they are decorated with compositions that include both depictions of amphorae and floral motifs and are divided into two subcategories: "composition of amphora with trefoil leaves" and "composition of amphora with half palmettes". Some of these bases have been published in the first volume of the final report of the excavations conducted by Urman and Shereshevski. The bases are noted as originating in the debris of the Central Church and were probably part this structure's architectural decorations.

## 2.5.2.1 Composition of Amphora with Trefoil Leaves

Doorjamb base NS.BP.9 is one of two bases decorated with a composition of amphora flanked by trefoil leaves (pl. 242). 174 At the top of the base there is a decoration of a flat and upright sunken relief band with a vertical, slightly convex molding ornamenting its center. The molding does not protrude from the face of the element. Below this band the decorated trapezoidal facet begins to slope outwardly. In the center of the facet there is a bas relief of an ornate amphora. The rim of the vessel is flared with a crescent shape hollowed-out at its top, providing a three-dimensional effect. The neck is conical. Two handles formed by slightly convex bands stem from below the rim to the shoulders of the amphora. The body is round in shape; solid at

<sup>173</sup> Colt (1962), 1-24; Shereshevski (1991), 49-60; Urman (2004), 1-90 (Hebrew section); Urman (2004), 1\*–118\* (English section). In the case of Urman's final excavation report there are a few variations between the Hebrew and the English sections of the publication; especially with regard to the figures that appear in either section. Therefore, the citation will specifically note from which of the sections the information was retrieved.

<sup>174</sup> Urman (2004), 83\*, 86\*, Fig. 111 (English section).

the top and decorated with relief at its bottom half. The relief is of an ornate ribbing formed by elongated ovals, narrow at the bottom and wider and rounded at their ends. The ribbing is longer at the sides of the body than at the center. Below the body of the vessel, the foot is composed of a solid oval shape in bas relief and the base is fluted. The right side of the element is badly damaged, but on the left side of the amphora there is a bas relief of a trefoil leaf. The leaf is composed of three short, hollowed-out, elongated ovals at the end of a stem formed of a slightly convex band. This floral motif stems from below the base of the amphora. The stem of the plant is curving and the trefoil leaf turns towards the side of the base. It is most likely that the design was symmetrical and that there was a similar trefoil leaf on the right of the amphora. At the bottom of the trapezoidal facet there is a flat, smooth and upright band.

Doorjamb base NS.BP.7 might have been paired with the previously described base; they are both ornamented with a similar composition (pl. 243).<sup>175</sup> The decoration at the top and the bottom is the same; a sunken relief band with a vertical, slightly convex, molding in the band's center at the top. The bottom band is a flat, smooth and upright. Interestingly, the decoration in the center of the trapezoidal facet is not created in bas relief, like on base NS.BP.9, but is engraved and in fact appears to be unfinished. The deeply engraved lines form the outline of an amphora with a fluted rim, conical neck, two handles, a round body and a fluted base. The bottom half of the body of the amphora is inhabited with a sunken relief of a similar ribbing effect as on the previous base. It appears as if there was a further engraving in the center of the top half of the body of the vessel which was crudely removed. From below the base of the amphora, on either side, there are engravings that represent two upwardly curving stems, with sunken relief trefoil leaves at their ends. The style of decoration of this element cannot be compared to other elements. It is possible that the outline of the composition was carved and prepared for the areas around it to be removed, so that the composition will appear in relief, but that for some reason this task was not completed. Nevertheless, the similarities in the design of the decoration of this element and base NS.BP.9 are striking.

## 2.5.2.2 Composition of Amphora with Half-Palmettes

Doorjamb base NS.BP.6 is the first in a series of bases decorated with a composition of amphorae flanked by two half-palmettes (**pl. 244**). The decoration begins at the top of the element with a sunken relief upright band. Below this band the face of the facet slopes outwards. In the center of the composition there is a depiction of an amphora. The neck and rim of the amphora are cylindrical and flared. In the

<sup>175</sup> Although this base was not published by Urman in the first volume of the excavation report, it is quite likely that it also originated in the Central Church.

<sup>176</sup> Urman (2004), 83\*, 86\*, Fig. 110 (English section).

area that composes the neck of the amphora. There is a sunken relief decoration of a "Greek cross" with flared arms. Two thin handles are carved in bas relief stemming from below the rim and reaching the area above the shoulders of the vessel. The body of the amphora is oval in shape and is decorated with a groove following the inside contour. A vertical band divides the body of the vessel in half. The top of the band is slightly flared and its bottom is greatly flared. The areas on either side of this band are hollowed-out. The base of the amphora was not preserved, but it can be discerned that it was located below a foot. On either side of the trapezoidal facet there are half-palmettes that do not reach with their lengths to the top and bottom of the facet. The half-palmettes are composed of elongated narrow leaves with rounded tips. They are carved within a sunken relief crescent-shape.

The doorjamb bases NS.BP.14 and NS.BP.56 are a pair of elements decorated with the same ornamentation carved in the same style (pls. 245-246). 177 Dooriamb base NS.BP.56 was discovered during the excavations of the site in the complex of the central church and therefore it is possible that base NS.BP.14 also originates from this location. Although, certain parts of the decoration of both bases are damaged enough was preserved to show that the compositions are the same, and therefore they will be described together. At the top of the protruding trapezoidal facet there is an upright sunken relief band with a vertical, slightly convex molding in its center. At the bottom of the facet there is a flat, smooth and upright band forming the decoration in the center. The main part of the composition is a round bodied amphora flanked by two half-palmettes. The rim of the amphora is flared and an oval shape is hollowed-out near its top. The neck is conical and two short handles, which stem below the rim and reach the shoulders of the amphora, are on either side of it. The body of the vessel is round and the base is fluted. The bottom half of the body is decorated with a relief of a ribbing effect. The ribbing is composed of elongated upright oval shapes that are narrower at the bottom than at their rounded tips. These "ribs" are hollowed-out and are longer near the sides of the body of the amphora than near the center. Their shape is also echoed in the shapes of the leaves that form the halfpalmettes. The top half of the body is decorated with thin concentric engravings that mimic the lozenge shape of this part of the vessel. The amphora is flanked by a half palmette at either side of the base. These are formed by narrow elongated leaves with rounded tips. The half-palmettes are set within a sunken crescent-shape area.

#### 2.5.3 Columns

Three ornamented column drums were discovered in the Eastern Church of the Lower City, during the excavations conducted by Prof. D. Urman and Dr.

<sup>177</sup> Doorjamb base NS.BP.56 was published by Urman (2004), 60, 62, 64, Fig. 88 (Hebrew section).

J. Shereshevski.<sup>178</sup> The compositions of the decoration of these three column drums all share some similarities in style, although two of the column drums were carved in limestone and one was carved of chalk. It is interesting to note that the style of decoration of these column drums is in some respects similar to the style of the decoration of capitals SH.P.CP.104 and SH.P.CP.105 from the South Church at Shivta and lintel SH.F.2.LT.39 from the "Governor's House", also from Shivta. Therefore, it is possible that these architectural elements were decorated by the same artisan.

Architectural element NS.CL.9 is a cylindrical limestone column drum decorated with high relief ornamentation (**pl. 247**).<sup>179</sup> The overall composition is of a "cross upon the Golgotha". The hillside is represented as a pyramid of half-circles. The three in the bottom tier are composed of solid half-circles, above it there are two hollowed-out half-circles, defined by thin bands; and the last tier is formed by a basrelief hollowed-out half-circle. Directly above this stylized representation of the Golgotha there is a high relief ornate "Greek cross" with flared arms. The tips of the arms are rounded and three deep grooves are carved along the length of the arms and section them into four solid parts. In the center of the cross there is a solid flat circular boss. In the corners between the arms of the cross, around its center, there are short single leaf motifs that are drop-shaped and hollowed-out. This motif also appears in the compositions of the other two column drums of this category.

The second column drum, NS.CL.11, is also carved in limestone **(pl. 248)**. <sup>180</sup> The main part of the composition is of a "cross immisa" with slightly flared arms in high relief. At the tips of each of the arms there is a small spherical boss. Coming out from on either side of the bottom of the cross there are stemmed trefoil leaves, one at either side. The stems are formed by upwards curving convex bands and the trefoil leaves are carved in the same fashion as the ones appearing on the previously described column drum. The leaves are elongated, hollowed-out and drop-shaped. The arms of the cross are inhabited by an inscription composed of five deeply engraved ancient Greek letters. The inscription reads:  $\varphi o \sigma z \omega \eta$ , "light" and "life", taken from the Gospel According to John, in which Jesus is referred to as "light" and "life" and the "light of life" in several passages. <sup>181</sup>

The last column drum to be described, NS.CL.10, is the most ornately decorated of the three, and unlike the other two, was carved of chalkstone (**pl. 249**). The main part of the composition is of a "cross immisa" with flared arms. The style of decoration of this ornate cross is very similar to the style of the cross ornamenting column drum NS.CL.9. In the center of the cross there is a flat, round boss and in the corners of the arms, pointing away from the center of the cross there are small elongated drop-like, hollowed-out leaves. The difference between the two crosses is that

<sup>178</sup> Urman (2004).

<sup>179</sup> Urman (2004), 58-59, Fig. 79.

<sup>180</sup> Urman (2004), 58-60, Fig. 80 (in Hebrew section); cf. 80\*-81\*, Fig. 100 (in English section).

<sup>181</sup> Urman (2004), 59; Figueras (2004), 238; cf. John 1:4, 8:12 and 12:46.

here the arms of the cross are section by two and not three grooves along their length. These deep grooves are triangular in section and are wider towards the ends of the arms, following their contour. Directly below the bottom of the cross there is a small upright triangle carved in high relief. The face of the triangle bears two horizontal protruding, rectangular-in-section bands; one at the bottom of the triangle and one just above its center. It is possible that this is a symbolic representation of the Golgotha. The composition continues with a floral decoration of stems and trefoil leaves that spring out from either side of the top of the triangle and below the bottom of the cross. The floral decoration is formed of upwards curving convex bands. Each band ends with a small trefoil leaf of small elongated, drop-shapes that are hollowed-out. The trefoil leaves are carved just below the horizontal arm of the cross, one on either side, and they curve towards the vertical arm of the cross. Below the center of the stems, adjacent to their outer contour, there are smaller trefoil leaves; there is one on either side and they are turned downwards.

## 2.5.4 Capitals

A group of eleven doorjamb capitals was documented, all out of their original archaeological context. The capitals are carved of either limestone or chalk and are decorated with a variety of compositions and in various levels of execution. For the purpose of the typology the doorjamb capitals have been divided into three subcategories on the basis of their ornamentation. These sub-categories are: geometric compositions with a zigzag pattern, cross and palmette compositions and varia. The capitals will be described form the most simplistically to the most elaborately decorated.

## 2.5.4.1 Geometric Compositions with a Zigzag Pattern

This sub-category includes five doorjamb capitals decorated with geometric compositions that include a "zigzag pattern". Three of the capitals have been carved of chalk and two of limestone.

The element with the most minimalistic decoration is doorjamb capital NS. CP.57 (pl. 250). This is a chalk rectangular ashlar with two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets. Both facets are decorated continuously with the same composition. The decoration begins at the top of the capital with a flat, smooth and upright band, defined at its bottom by a deep groove that is triangular in-section. Most of the face of the trapezoidal facet is left undecorated and the ornamentation continues towards the bottom, with a band of engraved dentils. The area left below this band is carved in sunken relief and is decorated with a "zigzag pattern" that was clearly engraved by free-hand. The level of execution suggests that this pattern was engraved either by a novice or by a layman.

Doorjamb capital NS.CP.69 was also carved in chalk and is a rectangular ashlar with two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets (pl. 251). The decoration is continuous both on the front and depth sides of the capital. The decoration begins at the top with a flat, upright and smooth band and below it the face of trapezoidal facet begins to slope inwardly. A large portion of the face of the decorated facet is covered by three successive, thick and slightly concave bands. The top two concave bands are further decorated by a very shallow engraving of a "fishbone pattern". The pattern starts at either end of the capital and converges in the middle to form a rhombus. The motif is engraved very shallowly and it may be that the decoration was not completed. The bottoms of the trapezoidal facets are decorated with a bas relief of a "zigzag pattern" of upside-down triangles. The negative area of the "zigzag pattern" below the trapezoidal facet is left crudely carved. The trapezoidal facet ends about 3cm above the bottom edge of the capital. This doorjamb capital is somewhat similar in its appearance to two doorjamb bases from a structure located on the acropolis of the site and defined by Urman as the "Priest House" (also known as Area C). These two doorjamb bases are located at the entrance from the inner courtyard to Room 4 (the "entertainment room"). Urman suggests that one of the capitals of this entrance was discovered in the debris of this room. This capital is more ornate than the bases and is not part of the present assemblage. Therefore it is possible that element NS.CP.69 may not be a doorjamb capital, but a doorjamb base; either from this dwelling or a different structure at the site. 182

Doorjamb capital NS.CP.59 is also decorated with a composition that includes both a "fishbone" and a "zigzag pattern" on both protruding trapezoidal facets (pl. 252). The shape of this ashlar is quite square and the front and depth side trapezoidal facets are roughly the same size. The decoration begins at the top with a flat, smooth and upright band, below which the face of the element begins to slope inwardly. The geometric composition begins just below the center of the trapezoidal facet with a slightly convex band that is more depressed then the face of the element. The band is decorated with a deep engraving of a "fishbone pattern" that starts at either sides of the capital. The pattern starts from the right edge. The left side of the pattern changes direction nearly as soon as it starts to form a rhombus and then converge with the right side of the pattern to form yet another rhombus. The "fishbone pattern" on the depth side trapezoidal facet starts at either side of the facet and converges at the center to form a single rhombus. The "fishbone pattern" band is followed by a "zigzag pattern" carved in bas relief. This pattern is composed of upside-down triangles and ends nearly 3cm before the bottom edge of the capital.

Doorjamb capital NS.CP.87 is decorated with a similar, but slightly more complex and finely executed ornamentation than the previously described element **(pl. 253)**. The two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets of this limestone capital are

**<sup>182</sup>** Urman (2004), 30–31, figs. 40–41 (Hebrew section); pp. 45\*–46\*, figs. 55–57 (English section).

decorated with the same continuous decoration. At the top of the trapezoidal facet there is a flat, smooth and upright band below which the face of the facet begins to slope inwardly. Below the center of the facet the composition begins with a band that is triangular in section and is decorated with a relatively dense "fishbone pattern". The pattern starts at either side of the facet and converges in the middle to form a rhombus in the center of the band. This is followed by a thin bas relief band that is semi-circular in section. Next there is a slightly thicker somewhat convex band, decorated with diagonal engraved lines forming a "rope pattern" band. This band is followed by a bas relief "zigzag pattern" band composed of upside-down triangles. The carving of this band on the depth side trapezoidal facet is more exact than the carving of this pattern on the front trapezoidal facet. Both trapezoidal facets end before the bottom edge of the capital.

The last doorjamb capital in this sub-category, NS.CP.71, is also decorated with a composition that includes a "fishbone" and "zigzag" patterns, but the overall shape of the capital is carved in a more ornate fashion (pl. 254). The capital is carved in limy-chalkstone and has two decorated trapezoidal facets. The depth side facet has a deep vertical rectangular depression carved in it, which interrupts the scheme of the decoration. Due to the somewhat deteriorated state of preservation of this side of the capital, it is impossible to discern if this depression was an original feature of the element or was added later. The two trapezoidal facets are not decorated with a continuous composition. The front facet is decorated at the top with a high relief "horned" decoration similar to the type that appears on "Nabatean capitals". It is formed by an upside-down high relief pyramidal shape, flanked on either side by a thick band that converges towards the shape in the center and is carved in very shallow relief towards the edges of the top of the capital. Below this the main part of the facet is decorated with a band that is slightly triangular in section and decorated with a "fishbone pattern". The motif starts at either side of the capital and converges in the center to form a rhombus shape. Below this the composition continues with a fillet band in bas relief, followed by a slightly more depressed band of a "zigzag pattern." This pattern is composed of upside-down triangles and ends slightly above the bottom edge of the element. The depth side trapezoidal facet is decorated with nearly the same composition, with the exception of the "zigzag pattern" band. Instead, the decoration ends with another shallower fillet molding.

## 2.5.4.2 Cross and Palmette Compositions

This sub-category includes four doorjamb capitals decorated with various compositions that include both cross and palmette motifs. Three of the elements were carved in chalk and one in limestone. The decoration of these capitals was conducted in various levels of execution.

The first two doorjamb capitals to be described form a pair of elements decorated with nearly the same composition and most likely by the same hand. Doorjamb capital NS.CP.41 is carved of chalk and doorjamb capital NS.CP.72 is carved in limychalkstone (pls. 255-256). 183 The former capital was published by Urman as originating from the debris of the Central Church and therefore it is highly likely that the latter, unpublished capital, also originated from the same location. Both elements are carved as rectangular ashlars with a single decorated protruding trapezoidal facet. In the center of the capital the decoration is of an ornate "Greek cross" with flared arms. The arms are carved in sunken relief and are further decorated with a thin band that follows the contour of the center of the cross. The arms are triangular in section. In the center of the cross there is a flat, solid circle. The cross is flanked by two halfpalmettes that are carved at either side of the trapezoidal facet. The leaves of the palmettes are thin, elongated and deeply hollowed-out with pointed tips. The contour of the palmettes is framed by a slightly convex band defined at either side by deep grooves. At the top edge of the capital there is a flat, smooth and upright band, defined at the bottom by a deep groove that is triangular in section. In capital NS. CP.41this element of the decoration does not exist. Towards the bottom of the trapezoidal facet, in the area between the two palmettes there is a design of three flat bands: a thin one between two thicker ones. The bands are defined by deep grooves. In capital NS.CP.72 there is an undecorated flat band at the bottom of the trapezoidal facet. In capital NS.CP.41 this band is decorated in its center with a relief of a semicircular conical shape that does not protrude from the face of the element. Doorjamb capital NS.CP.41 is carved in a slightly finer manner, but this could be because it was carved in softer raw material than capital NS.CP.72.

Doorjamb capital NS.CP.66 is a limestone rectangular ashlar with a single protruding decorated trapezoidal facet (pl. 257). The capital is quite chipped and weathered, but the composition of the decoration is similar to that of the two previously described doorjamb capitals. In the center of the facet there is a bas relief decoration of a "Greek cross" with triangular arms composed of a relatively thin band. Each arm is halved by a similar band in bas relief sectioning it across its length. The cross is flanked by two half palmettes carved on either side of the trapezoidal facet. The leaves of the palmettes are narrow, elongated and with pointed tips. The palmettes are framed by a convex band around their outline. At the bottom of the trapezoidal facet there is a bas relief band of "zigzag pattern" composed of upsidedown triangles. The trapezoidal facets end before the bottom edge of the capital. It is interesting to note, that there are remnants of red paint in and around the cross, in the palmettes and few remnants in the area between the bas relief triangles of the "zigzag pattern".

The last element in this group is doorjamb capital NS.CP.67 (pl. 258). It is composed of a limy-chalk rectangular ashlar with a single decorated protruding

**<sup>183</sup>** For NS.CP.41 see Urman (2004), 60, 62 (Hebrew section); 83\*, 85\* Fig. 108 (English section). This reference is also a good parallel for NS.CP.72.

trapezoidal facet. The top part of the trapezoidal facet is greatly damaged and the element is covered with patina. In the center of the composition there is a sunken relief of a "Greek cross" with arms that are flared at their ends. On either side of the cross there is an engraving of a "fishbone pattern" that converges in the center to form a rhombus, surrounding the cross. This composition is flanked on either side by half-palmettes with narrow, elongated leaves, which are pointed at their tips. The contour of the half-palmettes is framed by a flat band, defined at either side by grooves. Near the bottom of the trapezoidal facet, in the area between the two halfpalmettes, there is a register of thin flat bands defined by shallow horizontal grooves. At the bottom of the facet there is a flat and smooth band.

## 2.5.4.3 Varia

Two decorated doorjamb capitals could not be classified into the previous stylistic categories. Both have two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets. One capital was carved in limey-chalk while the other was carved in limestone. The style of the decoration of both of these capitals is very different.

The first doorjamb capital of this category, NS.CP.58, is carved in limychalkstone (pl. 259). This capital has two protruding trapezoidal facets decorated continuously with similar compositions. In the center of the top decorated register of the capital there is a bas relief, elongated trapezoidal shape. This motif is similar to the decoration of what is known as a Nabatean capital. On the depth side facet further decoration is visible on this trapezoidal protrusion. This ornament consists of a sunken relief semi-circle in which there is a bas relief of five thin radiating lines. It could be that the front trapezoidal facet bears a similar decoration, but the element is too weathered for this to be visible. In the center of the protruding trapezoidal facets there is a bas relief band of three "star-like shapes in frames". The lines that form the contour of these shapes are very thin bands. The star-like shapes have eight points and are formed by an overlapping cross and "X". Below this there is a fillet band followed by a thicker slightly convex band. The remaining 7.5cm before the bottom edge of the capital remain undecorated.

Doorjamb capital NS.CP.48 is carved in limestone, and although certain elements in the composition are quite unique, the overall design is similar to compositions appearing on doorjamb bases from the site (pl. 260). 184 This capital was published by Urman as originating from the debris of the Central Church. There are two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets. The composition on the front facet begins with a flat, smooth and upright band at the top, which is defined at the bottom, by a deep groove. Below this the face of the facet begins to slope inwardly. The main composition is of a stylized depiction of a bird in bas relief flanked on either side by half-palmettes. The head of the bird is egg-shaped in the center there is an

**<sup>184</sup>** Urman (2004), 60, 62 (Hebrew section); 83\*–84\*, Fig. 106 (English section).

eye-like oval shape defined by a hollowed-out outline on the outside and inside. Above this there are two drilled small depressions, possible representations of eyes. From the bottom of the head comes out a narrow band with a thin groove sectioning it vertically in half; this is possibly the beak. The neck is represented by two narrow bas relief bands. The body of the bird is also egg-shaped. The top part is solid and the lower part is inhabited by hollowed-out shapes: two elongated upside-down triangles in the center flanked by two pointed leaf shapes. The wings of the bird are spread and turned upwards and are represented by two bas relief crescent shapes. The feathers are represented by incised horizontal grooves along the inner side of the crescents. Below the body of the bird there is a bas relief depiction of the two feet of the bird, which are carved as thin bands forming short tarsus and feet with three radiating diagonal lines forming the toes of the bird. The two half-palmettes are carved schematically as a bas relief convex band framing a crescent shape. The area within this shape is filled with diagonal grooves that represent the leaves of the palmette. This composition is bordered at the bottom by a "zigzag pattern" of upside-down bas relief triangles. There are few remnants of red paint on various parts of the composition. The depth side trapezoidal facet is somewhat damaged at its left side, but is decorated with a half-palmette similar to the one appearing on the front side.

## 2.5.5 Cornices

Three architectural elements belong to this category. All three cornices are decorated in the same fashion and their general measurements only vary by a few centimeters. Cornices NS.CR.43 and NS.CR.47 (pls. 261–262) were carved in limestone and cornice NS.CR.44 (pl. 263) was carved in limy-chalk. The decoration of these three architectural elements consists of a front face, in the shape of an upside-down trapezoid. At the top, the cornices are decorated with a flat, smooth and upright band and a similar band is carved at the bottom of the cornice in sunken relief. The face of the cornice in-between these two bands slopes inwardly. These cornices were probably part of engaged pilasters and may have been carved contemporane-ously by the same artisan.

#### 2.5.6 Decorated Elements of Undefined Architectural Context

This last category includes five decorated elements whose original architectural function could not be ascertained. The elements are decorated with a variety of motifs and are carved both in chalk and limestone. The elements will be described from the most simplistically decorated to the most ornate.

The first element in this category, NS,UC.20, is a limestone rectangular ashlar with one decorated side (pl. 264). Though this architectural element is quite chipped and weathered the ornamentation is still somewhat visible and consists of a high relief "cross immisa". The horizontal and bottom part of the vertical arms are fluted. The top half of the vertical arm is formed originally by a high relief large boss (diameter approximately 10cm). On the upper left corner of the front face of the element there is a spot of faded red paint, suggesting that the area around the cross motif may have been painted.

Architectural element NS.UC.19 is a chalk rectangular ashlar with a decorated protruding facet that is somewhat damaged (pl. 265). The protruding facet is decorated with a sequence of moldings starting with a "cyma reversa" at the top, followed by a fillet and another "cyma reversa". At the bottom of the sequence there are two graded fillets. The face of the protruding facet slopes inwardly and the bottom most fillet is the most depressed. At the top and bottom of the element there are remnants of modern cement and on the back side there is a deep round depression in which the remnants of a bronze nail are still visible. It could be suggested that the original function of the architectural element was as a doorjamb capital or base. The remnants of the bronze nail may indicate that this stone was anchored to some part of a structure or that something was attached to it, but the poor preservation state of this artifact precludes further suggestions.

Although element NS.UC.24 also has a decorated protruding facet the composition and motifs appearing on it are not typical of doorjamb capitals or bases (pl. 266). These motifs mostly appear on lintels. This item was carved in limy-chalk and seems to have been broken after its use on several of its sides. The direction in which the element was originally placed cannot be inferred from the decoration because of the poor preservation state. The visible part of the composition is of a medallion composed of a convex band in high relief, which may represent a vine scroll. At one end of the medallion the band ends with a trefoil leaf of short round tipped petals. Across from this motif at the other side of the medallion there a small cluster of grapes is attached to the frame of the medallion by a short tendril. The cluster of grapes is not complete because of the damaged state of the element. The cluster is formed by a bas relief of a net-like pattern engraved to represent the individual grapes. Adjacent to this medallion there is a small surviving section of another medallion. The decoration within the first medallion appears to have been in relief, possibly a depiction of a four legged animal. It is interesting that while the medallion remains mostly in tact the decoration which was within it was badly damaged, perhaps deliberately. If indeed the medallion was inhabited by a faunal motif then this element, with its rectangular protruding facet, was a section of a decorated doorjamb.

Architectural element NS.UC.18 is also a rectangular ashlar with a protruding decorated rectangular facet (pl. 267). 185 Certain elements of its decoration are carved in a very similar fashion to the previously described artifacts. The carving is slightly finer in execution, but this could be the result of the element being carved in a softer chalk stone. The decoration is of an inhabited medallion, similar to the one appearing on element NS.UC.24. The medallion is a schematic vine tendril formed by a slightly convex band, a high relief that ends in a trefoil leaf composed of short, hollowed-out, round tipped petals. At the opposite side of the medallion there is what appears to be a cluster of grapes attached to the medallion via a short tendril. The element is quite damaged and most of the grape cluster was not preserved. At the other, better preserved side, of the medallion there is another bas relief of a grape cluster attached to the medallion with a long tendril formed by a slightly convex band. The grape cluster is more naturalized than on the previously described element and is carved as a collection of small clustered bosses. The medallion is inhabited by a cross engraved within a high relief of a solid octagonal, star-like shape. The cross is quite ornate. It is a "Greek cross" with flared arms that are each formed by three deep grooves, triangular in section and wider towards the ends of the cross. In the center of the cross there is a large slightly conical boss (diameter 5.2cm). In the four quadrants between the arms of the cross there are chiseled lines that radiate from the center of the cross outwardly. The style and quality of the decoration of this element are reminiscent of the decorated column drums from Nessana. This artifact was discovered in the excavations of the complex of the Central Church. It is quite possible that it was decorated by the same artisan that decorated the column drums and element NS.UC.24. This element was discovered in the debris of the nave of the Central Church and was identified as an arch segment. The overall shape of the element is not necessarily characteristic of an arch segment and it may have ornamented the doorjambs of one of the entrances to the church.186

The last architectural element in this group is NS.UC.23 (pl. 268). This is a rectangular limestone ashlar decorated with finely carved ornaments on three of its sides. The element is nearly broken in half and therefore it is possible that it was decorated on its fourth side as well. The composition of the decoration is identical on all three preserved sides. The top is also badly damaged, but it seems that the overall shape of the element was somewhat pyramidal. One possibility is that this was an ornate base or pedestal. At the corners of the top of the element there is a bas relief floral decoration. Part of the decoration is of downward turned, elongated leaves with hollowed-out centers. At the corners of the top of the element there are shorter, upward turned leaves, hollowed-out and with rounded tips. Below this the

<sup>185</sup> Urman (2004), 60, 64, Fig. 89.

<sup>186</sup> Urman (2004), 64.

sides of the element are slightly convex and are decorated with a series of moldings. At the top there is a relatively thin fillet band in bas relief, followed by a thick "rope pattern" band created by deep diagonal grooves. Directly below the "rope pattern" band there is a thin "bead-and-reel" band. The design is finely carved in bas relief. It includes a pattern of an oval bead between two horizontal conical beads: the reels are shaped as narrow vertical ovals. At the bottom of the element there is a smooth, flat and upright band 8cm in height.

## 2.6 Be'er Sheva

#### 2.6.1 Introduction

The modern day city of Be'er Sheva (Beersheba) was built on the same location as the ancient Roman - Byzantine village. This has become evident through finds that were discovered in numerous excavations and surveys conducted continually since the beginning of the twentieth century throughout the city. Be'er Sheva was nearly continuously settled since the sixth millennium BCE. In the Late Roman period it is mentioned in various historical documents, amongst them the Onomastikon of Eusebius the bishop of Caesarea – in which the settlement is referred to as a large village – and the Notitia Dignitatum Orientis (both dated to the 4th c. CE). At this time the settlement included a Roman army camp, which was identified in aerial photographs taken during the First World War. Other structures affiliated with the camp, among them a bath house and dwellings, were discovered later on in excavations. 187

The army camp continued to function during the Byzantine period and the settlement gained further prosperity. During this time Be'er Sheva is mentioned in various historical writings and appears on the mosaic map of Madaba. In this ancient map the settlement if depicted as relatively large. In addition to the rise in demography and expanding boundaries, the arrival of Christianity saw the establishment of six identified churches in Be'er Sheva, 188 one of them is the largest church to have been excavated in the Negev. 189 Monasticism is also mentioned in historical writings, and one structure, located in one of the neighborhoods of the modern city was identified as a monastery. In addition to the army camp, ecclesiastical buildings and the bath house several affluent domestic dwellings have been identified and partially excavated. The wealth of the residents of these structures is attested to in the richly ornate mosaic floors that have been discovered within the dwellings along with other finds. 190

**<sup>187</sup>** Gilead and Fabian (2008), 303, 314–318.

<sup>188</sup> Gilead and Fabian (2008), 318-320.

<sup>189</sup> Personal communication with Dr. Peter Fabian who directed the excavations of the church.

<sup>190</sup> Gilead and Fabian (2008), 321-322.

Information regarding the livelihood of the inhabitants of Byzantine Be'er Sheva is not known of from historical sources, but archaeological excavations have shed light on this matter. In the modern day city, the remains of a potter's workshop and a lime-kiln have been identified. The archaeological excavations also revealed the remains of several farmsteads and agricultural installations especially in the northern part of the city. These probably helped support the more urban population. Among the agricultural installations there are remains of olive and wine presses, a testament to oil and viticulture industries. <sup>191</sup>

The ethnicity of the population has been studied through the discovery of several, partially excavated cemeteries. These cemeteries are mainly located in the northern and eastern outskirts of the settlement. Although, nearly all of the inscriptions associated with the graves where written in Greek, the dominant language during this period; the names that appear in the inscriptions show that the ethnicity of the population was quite diverse and included also Arabs (of Nabatean descent) and Jews, as well as people who arrived to ancient Be'er Sheva from abroad and nearby provinces. 192

The provenance of the decorated architectural elements described in this subchapter, includes the modern day city of Be'er Sheva and its outskirts. None of these architectural elements have been previously published. Some of the artifacts originate from the excavations of the large church, now buried under the parking lot of the municipal market, <sup>193</sup> some were excavated at the northeastern outskirts of the city <sup>194</sup> and one doorjamb capital was recently unearthed in a salvage excavation conducted during the renovations of the central bus station. <sup>195</sup> All of these architectural elements are currently stored at the facilities of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

## 2.6.2 Capitals

A group of ten capitals, five of which are doorjamb capitals and five that are cylindrical column capitals, were documented. All of these capitals were discovered in archaeological excavations at sites that are located either within the modern city of Be'er-Sheva or in close proximity to it. These capitals were carved either in chalk or limestone and were decorated with a variety of compositions and varying levels of

<sup>191</sup> Gilead and Fabian (2008), 323-324.

<sup>192</sup> Gilead and Fabian (2008), 324-326.

<sup>193</sup> These artifacts were studied with the courtesy of Dr. Peter Fabian of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

**<sup>194</sup>** These elements were examined with the courtesy of Ya'aqov Y. Baumgarten, formerly of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

**<sup>195</sup>** The study of this artifact was made possible with the courtesy of Vlada Nikolsky-Carmel and Dr. Daniel Varga of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

execution. The decorational compositions appearing on these capitals are so diverse that they could not be further classified into stylistic categories. Therefore, the doorjambs capitals will be described first and then the column capitals. The elements will be described from the most simplistically to the most elaborately decorated.

## 2.6.2.1 Doorjamb Capitals

Doorjamb capital BS.CP.56 is a fragment of a rectangular ashlar with a protruding decorated trapezoidal facet (pl. 269). This element is chipped, broken and weathered and was vandalized by a modern day carving of a schematic face on its decorated facet. The decoration begins 2cm from the top edge of the capital with a band of bas relief, widely spaced square shapes. One square is relatively close to the left edge of the trapezoidal facet and is followed by another square relief. It would seem logical that the design would continue with two more square shapes at least, but where the third square relief would be there is not one, and the rest of this area of the capital is damaged. Below the band with the two squares there is a relatively thin bas relief convex band decorated with a "rope pattern", formed by thin diagonal grooves. This band is defined at the top and bottom by two deep grooves. The rest of the area of the trapezoidal facet appears to have been left undecorated. This capital was discovered in collapse at a salvage excavation, conducted in the Central Bus Station of Be'er-Sheva by the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The following four doorjamb capitals to be described were all discovered in an excavation conducted at the outskirts of the modern day city of Be'er-Sheva, in the vicinity of Nahal (stream) Be'er-Sheva by the Israel Antiquities Authority. The first is doorjamb capital BS.CP.4; a limestone rectangular ashlar with two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets (pl. 270). Both trapezoidal facets are decorated with a geometric design that covers the entire face of the protruding facet. The front trapezoidal facet was better preserved. The top part of the composition is of a "net pattern" of horizontal and vertical, slightly convex bands, in bas relief. The distance between the horizontal and vertical bands is exactly 3cm, showing that the design was meticulously preplanned. The bottom part of the ornamentation of the trapezoidal facet is of a sequence of graded fillets, more protruding at the top than at the bottom. The fillet bands are not carved as accurately as the "net pattern" above and their heights are approximately 2cm each.

Doorjamb capital BS.CP.6 was carved in chalk and has two protruding trapezoidal facets, decorated with a continuous geometric pattern (pl. 271). The decoration is approximately 8cm from the top edge of the capital and is of a repetitive design. The composition begins with two thin, adjacent bas relief bands, separated by a thin groove. Below these double bands there is a register of an engraved decoration of a "fishbone pattern". The pattern starts from either side of the facet and converges in the center, to form a rhombus. The pattern is intersected by a thin vertical groove, divided in its center by a thin horizontal groove. This forms a cross pattern. This register is followed by two additional, adjacent, bas relief bands, separated by a groove. This is followed by another register decorated with the same composition as the register at the top. At the bottom, the composition is bordered by two more bands in bas relief, separated by a thin groove.

Doorjamb capital BS.CP.3 is a limestone rectangular ashlar with two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets (pl. 272). The decoration of the front trapezoidal facet begins with a smooth, flat and upright band below which the face of the facet begins to slopes inwardly. In the center of the composition there is a sunken relief vertical band, decorated with a bas relief pattern of two horizontal rectangles alternating with a flat boss. From the upper corners of the facet (below the top upright band) leaning diagonally towards the center of the facet there are sunken relief bands, one at either side. Each band is decorated with a bas relief of adjacent rhomboids. At the top part of the composition, between the vertical bands, there is an engraving of two concentric circles; one on either side of the vertical band. The depth side trapezoidal facet seems to have only been decorated with the upright bands and a single diagonal bas relief band. In the center of this facet there is a large deep circular depression, possibly designed to fit a socket of a door.

The last doorjamb capital in this group is element BS.CP.7 (pl. 273). 196 This is a chalkstone rectangular ashlar with two ornately decorated protruding facets; both facets are decorated with identical compositions. The top of the composition is reminiscent of the design that appears on elements known as "Nabatean Capitals". In the center, a high relief, upside-down, pyramidal shape ornaments the element. On the front side, protruding facet, the guidelines of the craftsman appear in the form of thin grooves. From below the "tip" of the pyramid, curving upwardly on either side, there are bas relief carvings of a design resembling drapery, flow to the upper top corners of the facet and cascades down towards its bottom. This "drapery" reaches an upright decorated register at the bottom of the capital. The register is framed at the top by a thin, bas relief, convex band. The decoration below this is composed of a wavy band representing a grape vine, formed by a bas relief band with a groove engraved along its center. In the spaces left between the curves of the vine, bas relief carvings of grape clusters and grape leaves of various shapes are depicted. The grape clusters are attached to the vine by short tendrils and are composed of clusters of bosses.

#### 2.6.2.2 Column Capitals

The first two elements in this group of column capitals, also originate from the excavation conducted in the vicinity of Nahal Be'er-Sheva. Both capitals have been

**<sup>196</sup>** For a possible parallel see doorjamb capital NT.CP.50 in the catalogue. NT.CP.50 is also published by Segal (1988), 210.

carved in limestone and were reused as mortars or basins after they were no longer functioning as column capitals.

Column capital BS.CP.32 is quite weathered and is ornamented by a lathe-made decoration (pl. 274). At the top, the capital has a square-shaped plinth, and below it the body of the capital is slightly oval in shape, like an upside-down mushroom cap. There are thin, barely visible lathe-made grooves around the circumference of the capital. At the top of the capital, in the center of the abacus there is a bowl-like depression, about 7cm deep and 18,5cm in diameter. It could be that the element was used as an *ad hoc* mortar after it went out of use as a capital.

Column capital BS.CP.11 was also carved in limestone (pl. 275). The capital has a square abacus and a somewhat cylindrical body. The circumference of the capital is decorated with lathe-made thin grooves that are placed at varying distances from one another. Most of the top side of the capital was carved out to form a type of basin. At the four corners of the top side there is a fourth shallow circular depression.

The following three column capitals to be described were all discovered in an excavation conducted within the city of Be'er-Sheva, in the current location of the parking lot that serves the municipal market. The excavations were of a large Byzantine church and it is possible that these elements were part of its ornamentation. The first two capitals to be described are decorated in a similar fashion, while the third bears a completely different type of decoration.

Column capital BS.CP.10 was carved in limestone and is poorly preserved (pl. **276).** Although it is likely that the decoration was on all four sides, only one decorated side was preserved. The capital is monolithic, carved with an ornamented square abacus over a cylindrical body. The decoration that remains on the side of the abacus is of a carving resembling "drapery" culminating in a triangular shape in its center. The face of the triangle is decorated with an engraving of what may be a schematic palm branch, formed of slightly curving horizontal lines, set in two paralleling columns that are separated by a narrow vertical gap with a thin groove in its center. The lines are longer at the top of the design and become increasingly shorter. At the top of the palm branch there are two short curving horizontal grooves. From the tip of the upside-down triangular shape, stem two grooves, one on either side. These grooves curve upwards and continue widening horizontally towards the sides of the face of the abacus, creating a "draping effect".

Column capital BS.CP.9 could be paired with the previously described capital on the basis of its decoration, although it is carved in a different raw material, chalk (pl. 277). This capital is better preserved than the previously described element; large portions of three of the decorated sides of the abacus were preserved in a somewhat weathered state. The overall shape of the abacus is square and below it there is the cylindrical body of the capital. It appears that all sides of the abacus were carved with a "draping" relief. The top part of the design is horizontal and below each side there is a free relief of a downwards curving "horn-shape". This shape curves downwards towards the center of the abacus and culminates in an upside-down triangle shape. The "horn-shape" is defined by a deep groove that widens towards the side edges of the abacus. The face of the upside-down triangle is highlighted by a solid sunken relief, which follows its contour. This sunken relief triangular area is further decorated by bas reliefs. On one side of the abacus there is a bas relief schematic palm branch formed of slightly curving horizontal bands. Another side of the abacus is decorated with two adjacent flat vertical bands that start at the tip of the triangular area. The relief decoration continues above these bands, but it is too damaged and weathered to be described. The third side of the abacus is broken and weathered, but the decoration may have consisted of a series of concentric bands, separated by grooves that mimic the contour of the triangular area.

The last column capital in this group, BS.CP.12, was carved in limestone and is in such a poor preservation state that the original direction in which it was placed cannot be ascertained **(pl. 278)**. The decoration seems to have been some sort of a high relief floral motif, but it is quite fragmentary and therefore cannot be described in detail. At either the top or the bottom of the capital, there is a band of alternating semi-circles and triangles in bas relief, with contours formed by two thin paralleling bands. This capital is somewhat unusual in the overall style of its decoration.

#### 2.6.3 Cornices

Two cornices were documented. Both were discovered in the same excavation at the outskirts of the modern day city of Be'er-Sheva, in the vicinity of Nahal Be'er-Sheva. These cornices were carved in limestone and decorated in two distinct manners; one in a minimalistic fashion and one with a more complex design.

Cornice BS.CR.31 is a trapezoidal ashlar with one decorated side **(pl. 279)**. At the top, the decoration includes a flat, smooth and upright band. Below the band the face of the element begins to slope inwardly. At the bottom of its decorated side of the cornice is ornamented with another upright band carved in sunken relief.

Cornice BS.CR.30 is very weathered and its right side is damaged (pl. 280). Although the decoration is only visible on its front and left sides, it is quite possible that the right side was also decorated. The decoration is identical and continuous on both decorated sides. At the top the composition begins with a flat, smooth and upright band, defined at the bottom by a thin groove. Below this band the face of the element begins to slope inwardly. At approximately the center of the composition there is a thin upright band in sunken relief followed by a much thicker, upright band that is carved in even deeper sunken relief. This is followed by three thin graded bands, each one more depressed than the one above it. The three bands are followed by a bas relief band of rectangular dentils, separated by thin grooves. At the bottom of the composition there is another upright, flat and smooth band in sunken relief.

## 2.6.4 Lintels

Two limestone lintels that originate from the excavation at the outskirts of Be'er-Sheva were documented. The two lintels are decorated with very different compositions. The first lintel, BS.LT.6 is decorated with a bas relief of a tabula ansata composed of a rectangular shape flanked by triangular "dovetail handles" (pl. 281). The motif is decorated in its center by a medallion formed of a bas relief smooth band. The lintel is broken in half along its center and therefore the decoration that inhabits the medallion is greatly damaged. From what remains, the decoration was of a bas relief "Greek cross" with flared arms. A flat band that is defined by two horizontal grooves divides the rectangular part of the tabula ansata in half on either side of the medallion. Above and below this band there are engraved diagonal lines creating a "fishbone pattern". The "arrowheads" that form the pattern point away from the medallion. This entire composition is framed by a groove that follows the contour of the tabula ansata and forms a flat frame around the decoration.

The second lintel in this group, BS.LT.3, is more elaborately decorated than the previously described lintel (pl. 282). Only two-thirds of the lintel are preserved and parts of the decoration have been weathered quite extensively. If the composition was symmetrical, then in the center of the lintel there would have been the relief decoration that now appears near the broken edge of the element. This is a bas relief of a medallion formed by a slightly convex band inhabited by a "wheel-spoke rosette". The overall design of the rosette is somewhat concave and the petals are elongated, deeply hollowed-out and with pointed tips. In the center of the rosette there is a large round bas relief boss. The medallion is further framed within a bas relief of an interlocking rhombus and a square. The contour of this frame is formed by slightly convex bands. On the left side of this part of the decoration there is a bas relief of a grape cluster. The grape cluster is triangular in shape and composed of adjacent round-square bosses. Above the grape cluster there seems to be a relief of a short vine tendril and a leaf. Immediately to the left of the grape cluster there is a relief composition of "starlike shapes in frames". There are three rows with three "star-like shapes" in each row. This design takes up the entire height of the lintel. The frames are formed by thin bands and the arms of the "star-like shapes" are composed of two paralleling bands that converge in the center to form an ornate "X" shape. The areas within and around these "star-like shapes" are hollowed-out. The lintel is also broken on its left side and it is possible that the design would have continued to the left of what remains of the decoration of the element.

# 2.7 Rehovot-in-the-Negev

#### 2.7.1 Introduction

Rehovot-in-the-Negev is the second largest settlement in the Elusa Oikoumene with an estimated size of 10.3ha (plan 24). The oldest finds are pottery sherds that may allude to a small Nabatean settlement dated to the 1st c. CE. The external walls of the dwellings at the periphery of the settlement form a continuum and thus define its outline. Excavations were conducted in a few locations at the site, which remains mostly unexplored. Four churches have been identified, two of which have been excavated. The first is the Central Church, defined by Tsafrir as the earliest church in the Negey, and originating in the late 4th or early 5th c. CE. As opposed to the Central Church, which was built in between the dwellings of the village, the North Church was constructed in its outskirts. This church is the only one in the Negev to contain a crypt. The entrance to the crypt included a double staircase to facilitate the movements of groups through it. Apart from the four churches and a bathhouse that was identified in a poor preservation state, another public building that was excavated at the site was identified as a Khan. This structure is located in close proximity to the Central Church and contained a stable, suitable for six animals. The subsistence economy of the inhabitants of Rehovot-in-the-Negev was based on agriculture, similarly to the inhabitants of the other villages described in this study. 197

## 2.7.2 Lintels

A partially broken lintel, RN.LT.14, has been documented in storage at the Israel Antiquities Authority **(pl. 283).** About two-thirds of the lintel have been preserved and it appears that the decoration consisted of a composition of three inhabited medallions set within a frame carved in relief. The center medallion is composed of a bas relief flat band ornamented with diagonally engraved lines that form a "rope pattern". The medallion is inhabited by a compass-made, six petaled rosette. The petals are needle-shaped with pointed tips. The outer tips of the petals are joined together by curved lines that form shapes similar to the shapes of the petals, along the inner contour of the medallion. The spaces within and around the petals of the rosette are deeply hollowed-out.

<sup>197</sup> Tsafrir (1988), 1-9; Shereshevski (1991), 94-102.

**<sup>198</sup>** All of the architectural elements from Rehovot-in-the-Negev have been studied with the kind permission of Prof. Yoram Tsafrir of the Hebrew University and access to some of them was made possible with the courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Nearer the side edge of the lintel there is another inhabited medallion. The frame of this medallion is identical to that of the center medallion. This medallion is inhabited by a different type of rosette. The overall shape of the rosette is quite concave. It is somewhat similar to a "wheel-spoke rosette", but the petals here are relatively wide and with rounded tips. The petals are concave and shallowly hollowed-out. In the center of the rosette there is a mid-relief large conical boss. Between the two medallions there is a depiction of a column in bas relief. The column has a rectangular capital and base and its shaft is decorated with diagonal engraved lines that give the column shaft a spiraling effect. The composition of the medallions and column are closely framed within a bas relief rectangular frame that follows the contour of the lintel, but is carved a few centimeters away from the edge of the element. At the top of the band that forms the frames, near its inner edge, there is a thin groove that divides the frame into a double frame with a thicker and a thinner band. 199

## 2.7.3 Capitals

A group of five doorjamb capitals currently stored at the Hebrew University were documented. One of the capitals is decorated with a composition of "star-like shapes in frames", and the other four are decorated with a variety of compositions in which the palmette is a prominent motif. These doorjamb capitals were carved both in chalk and limestone.

## 2.7.3.1 Star-Like Shapes in Frames

Doorjamb capital RN.CP.64 is carved in limestone. It is a rectangular ashlar with two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets (pl. 284). The faces of the trapezoidal facets slope inwardly and the decoration of both facets is similar and continuous. The main part of the composition is a relief of "star-like shapes in frames". There are two rows, one above the other, with three "star-like shapes in frames" in each row. The "stars" are four pointed and in the shape of the letter 'X'. The arms of the "stars" are triangular in section and wider towards the center of the motif. The areas between the arms of the "star-like shapes" are deeply hollowed-out. The main composition is set within a rectangular frame and carved on the trapezoidal facet of the capital. On either side of the rectangular area the remaining space is decorated with a relief of a half "starlike shape". On the trapezoidal facet of the depth side there is only one similarly decorated area besides the edge of the rectangular frame. The main part of the composition is framed on top and bottom by concave horizontal bands that are defined at their tops and bottoms by a deep thin groove. The trapezoidal facets terminate before the bottom edge of the capital.

#### 2.7.3.2 Palmettes

There are four doorjamb capitals in this category; two of which are decorated with similar compositions and therefore may constitute a pair of capitals that ornamented the same entrance. The elements in this sub-category will be described from the most simplistically to the most complexly ornamented.

The first doorjamb capital, RN.CP.60, is carved in limestone and has one visible decorated protruding trapezoidal facet (pl. 285). There may have been two such decorated facets, but this element is poorly preserved and quite weathered. At the top of the trapezoidal facet there is a flat, smooth and upright band, below which the face of the facet begins to slope inwardly. This band is relatively thick and its height is 4.6cm. Above the main part of the composition it is framed by a horizontal band that bears a decoration that may be a schematic form of a "beadand-reel" pattern. At the right end there is a bas relief circular shape with a face that slants downwards from left to right. This is followed by two more vertical bands that frames a round boss flanked on either side by circular shapes. The face of the circular shapes slant towards the boss in the center. To the left of this decoration there is another composition of a boss flanked by two circles with slanted faces, but the full decoration was not preserved because the left part of the trapezoidal facet has a broken edge. The entire band is framed within thin flat bands, one at the top and the other at the bottom. Below this the main part of the decoration is of a bas relief composition of a whole palmette flanked by two halfpalmettes. The leaves of the palmettes are carved as narrow elongated thin bands. The leaves in the center of the palmette are longer than the leaves near the outside and the bottom.

Doorjamb capitals RN.CP.62 and RN.CP.63 are both carved in chalk and decorated with similar, though not identical, compositions (pls. 286-287). The decorative composition of both capitals includes a center motif flanked by two halfpalmettes. The overall shapes of the half-palmettes are concave, with the tips of the narrow leaves that form them, protruding in bas relief. The leaves are elongated, with rounded tips and are hollowed-out. The main part of the composition of capital RN.CP.62 is different than that of capital RN.CP.63. The top of the trapezoidal facet converges towards the center of the facet and in the center there is a high relief, upside-down, pyramidal shape; similar to ones that appear on "Nabatean Capitals". On either side of this shape there is a flat and upright band. This band is cut by the two half-palmettes. Between the half-palmette and below the top band, on either side of the pyramidal shape, there is a decoration of two adjacent bas relief bands that curve downwards and converge in the center of the facet below the pyramidal shape, to form three adjacent vertical bands.

The center decoration of doorjamb capital RN,CP,63 has the same decoration at the top as appears on capital RN.CP.62, but in this element the two downwards curving bands end at either side of the upside-down pyramidal shape. Below the pyramidal shape there is a decoration of two concentric baseless triangles whose contour is formed by two bas relief bands with a hollowed-out groove between them. In both of the doorjamb capitals the bottom of the trapezoidal facets are decorated in the same manner with two graded fillet bands, the top one more protruding than the one on the bottom. Below these two fillets there is a slightly more depressed band that is upright and is shorter than the width of the trapezoidal facet.

Doorjamb capital RN.CP.61 is carved in limestone (pl. 288). This is a relatively elongated rectangular ashlar with two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets. Both facets are decorated with the same composition in a continuous fashion. The main part of the ornamentation consists of two rows of palmettes carved somewhat naturalistically and in high relief. The leaves of the palmettes are elongated, narrow and with rounded tips. The bottom and top leaves are shorter than the leaves in the middle and, aside from the top leaves, their ends curve backwards and downwards in a naturalistic fashion. The centers of the leaves are hollowed-out. On the front trapezoidal facet the top row of palmettes contains three whole palmettes and one half-palmette near the right edge of the facet. The bottom row of palmettes protrudes more and the palmettes are longer and taller than the top row. The bottom row contains two whole palmettes and one half-palmette near the right edge of the facet. The depth side trapezoidal facet is better preserved. The top row contains two whole palmettes flanked by two half palmettes and the bottom row contains two whole palmettes and one half-palmette, near the left edge of the facet. It is interesting to note that the level of craftsmanship with which these palmettes were created is unique. The palmettes are carved in an unusually higher relief and appear more three-dimensional in comparison to other carved palmettes from the Negev, documented in this assemblage. The composition of the palmettes is framed at the top with a flat, smooth and upright band; below this band the face of the facets begins to slope inwardly and at the bottom there is a relatively thin bas relief fillet band. The trapezoidal facets end before the bottom edge of the element.

### 2.7.4 Cornices

A group of four cornices has been documented. All of the elements in this group were discovered during Tsafrir's excavations of the North Church at Rehovot-in-the-Negev on behalf of the Hebrew University. These elements have been previously published by Patrich in the final report of the excavation. These cornices have

<sup>200</sup> Patrich (1988).

been carved of both chalk and limestone and are decorated with a variety of compositions; they will be described from the most simplistically to the most elaborately decorated. Cornices RN.CR.29, RN.CR.28 and RN.CR.36 are currently stored at the storeroom of the Israel Antiquities Authority, while cornice RN.CR.42 is currently stored at Hebrew University.

Cornice RN.CR.29 is a trapezoidal chalk ashlar decorated only on its front side (pl. 289).<sup>201</sup> At the top of the element there is a flat, smooth and upright band, below which the face of the cornice begins to slope inwardly. Most of the front face is well dressed, but left undecorated. At the bottom of the cornice there is a flat and upright sunken relief band. This cornice was discovered in the pier of the North Chapel in the North Church.

Cornice RN.CR.28 is a partially broken, trapezoidal limestone ashlar (pl. 290).<sup>202</sup> There are two decorated sides, but there may have been three decorated sides. The right side of the cornice was not preserved. At the top the decoration includes a slightly concave band defined by a thin groove. Below this band there is a flat, upright and smooth band below which the face of the element begins to slope inwardly. At the bottom of the two decorated facets there is a sunken relief upright band. This cornice was discovered in the southeast corner of the inner court of the atrium of the North Church.

Cornice RN.CR.42 is a limestone trapezoidal ashlar that is decorated continuously on three sides (pl. 291).<sup>203</sup> The decoration begins at the top of the cornice with a triangular in section band. There is a groove deeply carved and runs along the apex of this band. The triangular band is followed by a thin fillet molding below which the face of the cornice begins to slope inwardly. The thin fillet is followed by a wide smooth band; the face of the band slopes inwardly. Below the band there is a thin fillet followed by a convex band that is decorated by diagonal engravings that form a "rope pattern". The "rope pattern" band is followed by another thin fillet molding. At the bottom of the cornice there is an upright, sunken relief band. This cornice was discovered near the northeastern corner of the basilica of the North Church.

The last cornice in this category is element RN.CR.36 (pl. 292).<sup>204</sup> This is a trapezoidal limestone ashlar decorated continuously on two sides. At the top of the cornice there is a flat, smooth and upright band, below which the face of the element begins to slope inwardly. The upright band is followed by a smooth band, defined at the top and the bottom by thin grooves. The smooth band is followed by a "rope pattern" band formed by diagonal engravings. The "rope pattern" band is followed by a bas relief band of a "bead-and-reel" pattern. This decoration

<sup>201</sup> Patrich (1988), 102.

<sup>202</sup> Patrich (1988), 101-102.

<sup>203</sup> Patrich (1988), 104.

<sup>204</sup> Patrich (1988), 104.

is composed of alternating, elongated hexagonal shapes and smaller, deeply hollowed-out rhomboids. This band is defined at the top and the bottom by a thin bas relief fillet band. At the bottom of the cornice there is another upright and smooth band. This cornice was discovered in the atrium of the North Church.

#### 2.7.5 Arches

A single decorated arch segment, RN.AR.11, is currently located in storage at the Hebrew University (pl. 293). This element is an elongated concave limychalkstone ashlar, decorated on one of its depth sides. The shape of the element indicates that it may have functioned as a keystone. The decorated face of the voussoir is somewhat trapezoidal in shape. At the top of the decorated face there is a convex band that is followed by a smooth and upright band. Below this band the face of the voussoir begins to slope inwardly and becomes concave. At the bottom the composition of the decoration ends with an upright sunken relief band.

#### 2.7.6 Decorated Element from an Undefined Architectural Context

RN.UC.21 is a limestone ashlar currently located at the Hebrew University (pl. **294).** The poor state of preservation of this element prevents the identification of its original function with any certainty. The decoration of this element is not only partially missing, but is also very weathered. Near the left edge there is a bas relief of a motif that may be a depiction of a column, but is nearly indescribable. The main part of the decorated face is ornamented with an inhabited medallion. The frame of the medallion is composed of two paralleling high relief bands, and in between them a relief of a "zigzag pattern". The medallion is inhabited by a cross with straight arms that reach the inner frame of the medallion. The arms are decorated in the same manner as the frame of the medallion. The arms are formed by two paralleling lines with a "zigzag pattern" decorating the area between them. The top half of the medallion has been weathered away. In the bottom two quarters, created by the arms of the cross, there are bas relief depictions of the Greek letters Alpha and Omega. The Alpha appears on the left and the *Omega* on the right. The letters are formed by slightly convex bands.

# 2.8 Sa'adon

#### 2.8.1 Introduction

The settlement of Sa'adon is located approximately 9km southwest of Elusa and only 4km northeast of Rehovot-in-the-Negev (plan 25). Sa'adon was never excavated, but a survey of the site and its environs was conducted in 1984–1985 by Rubin and Schershewsky. The surveyors observed that the site was not harmed by stone robbers due to its relatively difficult to access location. Sa'adon is built as an irregular rectangle and covers an area of approximately 2.5ha. The dwellings of the site are similar to Byzantine dwellings all around the Negev and are constructed in close proximity. The closeness of the domestic structures defines the contour of the site, which is otherwise not protected by a wall. Two mono-apsidal churches have been identified amongst the dwelling complexes in the northeast and southwest of the site. In addition, a large structure at the southern outskirts of the settlement was tentatively identified by the surveyors as a church, larger in measurements than the two mono-apsidal churches. No indications for the existence of a settlement at this location prior to the Byzantine period were observed.

The subsistence economy of the inhabitants of Sa'adon was mainly agriculture. Remnants of terraces and damns were documented in the wadis surrounding the settlement, as well as several animal enclosures. In addition, in the vicinity of the site numerous lime kilns were identified. It has been suggested by the researchers that these kilns produced more lime than was needed for construction projects in the site and that this surplus was another economic enterprise. <sup>205</sup>

#### 2.8.2 Doorjambs

A section of doorjamb SD.DJ.14 was observed lodged partially in the ground in what appears to be a large structure complex in the southern section of the site **(pl. 295, plan 25).**<sup>206</sup> The element is very weathered and the decoration is not fully exposed, but it seems that this section of the doorjambs was decorated with two paralleling fillets running along its length vertically. There is a gap between the two fillets and they are carved some distance from the edges of the front face of the doorjambs.

<sup>205</sup> Rubin and Schershewsky (1988), 49-54; Shereshevski (1991), 90-93.

**<sup>206</sup>** Rubin and Schershewsky (1988), 53; this doorjamb was identified by the authors as a cornice and the complex was suggested to be the southern and primary church of the settlement.

#### 2.8.3 Cornices

Cornice SD.CR.65 was documented in collapse just south of the apse of the Northeast Church (pl. 296, plan 25). The overall shape of the element is slightly concave and therefore it may have ornamented the apse of this church. The decoration consists of a bas relief slightly protruding band, followed by a deep groove that is triangular in section. Below this decoration, most of the face of the cornice is left undecorated, but well hewn. At the bottom of the cornice there is an upright sunken relief band.

#### 2.8.4 Arches

Two arch segments, SD.AR33 and SD.AR.34, were documented in the vicinity of the apse of the Northeast Church and may have been part of the decoration of a half dome above it (pls. 297-298, plan 25). Both voussoirs are decorated with an identical composition of moldings. In the center of the arch segment there is a wide concave, finely dressed band. This above and below the band there are two bas relief fillets. The fillets are not flat, but slant towards the center of the element. This produces the illusion that there are two more concave wide bands below the top one. At the top and bottom of the composition there is a flat, upright and smooth band.

# 2.9 Elusa

#### 2.9.1 Introduction

The site of Elusa is located 20km southwest of the modern day city of Be'er-Sheva (plan 26). The town is mentioned in several historical sources, among them: the Peutinger Table, the Madaba Map, the accounts of the Piacenza pilgrim and Ptolemy, and lastly, St. Jerome who remarked that the bishops of Elusa took part in the Councils of Ephesus. The historical texts also refer to a rhetoric school that may have functioned at Elusa. The archaeological evidence indicates that the beginnings of the site were in the 3rd c. BCE, probably as a Nabatean caravansary on the main route from Petra to Gaza. Elusa, the only polis in the Negev, flourished during the Late Roman period as attested to by a theater, constructed at the site during the 2nd c. CE. It has been suggested that the town's inhabitants converted to Christianity sometime during the early fifth century. The Byzantine settlement was approximately 39ha, in size, Most of the structures of Elusa are no longer visible due to coverage by sand dunes or human activity. The settlement was also damaged by stone robbers who used the stones for construction in various other places.

The first detailed plan of Elusa was prepared by Woolley and Lawrence. Although this plan was greatly criticized subsequently, a recent re-examination using GIS tools showed it to be quite accurate. The plan shows that the settlement was surrounded by a wall and had three different entrances. The overall plan of the town was not hippodamic. Elusa had at least four churches of which only one was excavated thoroughly. The church was one of the largest found in the Negev and during a second phase in its construction was decorated with marble and even ceiling mosaics; this lead to the suggestion that the church was a Cathedral. The economic industries of the inhabitants included agriculture – as attested to by a complex winepress, and a potter's workshop, excavated and dated to the 6th c. CE. Elusa was abandoned sometime after the Arab conquests. 207

#### 2.9.2 Lintels

A single lintel, EL.LT.10, was recovered from robbery near Nahal 'Atadim in the vicinity of the site and therefore it is presumed that this lintel belongs to it.<sup>208</sup> The lintel is fragmentary and only about half of it survived in two broken segments (pl. **299)**; it was carved in limestone and was found in a quite weathered state. The remains of a composition that includes two different types of rosettes is discernible and it is most likely that the full decoration was of a rosette in the center flanked by two rosettes of various types. The ornamentation of the center rosette is broken in half, but it can be seen that this was a compass-made six petaled rosette. The petals are narrow, needle shaped and with pointed tips. The outer tips of the petals are further connected by curving bands that form shapes that are similar to the shapes of the petals; these shapes follow the outline of the medallion framing the rosette. The areas within and around the petals are deeply hollowed-out. The frame of the medallion is formed by two adjacent slightly convex bands. The inner band is thinner than the outer band. The rosette and medallion are further set within an interlacing square and rhombus frame. The outlines of this frame are composed of bas relief bands that are engraved with a thin groove above the center of their outline. On one side of this center decoration, there is another medallion inhabited with a rosette. The medallion is composed of a slightly convex band and the rosette inhabits the entire area within it. It is a "wheel-spoke rosette" with narrow petals that widen towards their rounded tips. The area within the petals is hollowed-out. In the center of the rosette there is a round, somewhat flattened boss.

**<sup>207</sup>** Mayerson (1983), 247–253; Shereshevski (1991), 82–90; Negev (1993), 379–383; Saidel and Christopherson (2005), 53–63; Arubas and Goldfus (2008), 1713–1715.

<sup>208</sup> Personal communication with Yoram Haimi of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

# 2.9.3 Capitals

Two more elements that were recovered from robbers near Nahal 'Atadim, and in the vicinity of Elusa, are doorjamb capitals. Both of these capitals were carved in limestone and bear complex compositions that are carved in relief. Another similarity is that both elements are rectangular with two protruding trapezoidal facets that are decorated with only partly continuous compositions.

The first is capital EL.CP.26 (pl. 300). The main part of the front trapezoidal facet is decorated with a bas relief of two whole palmettes flanked by two half palmettes. The whole palmettes are narrow, upright and stand on a short stem. The leaves of these palmettes are narrow and wider towards their rounded tips. The leaves are hollowed-out. The two palmettes are flanked on either side by two concave palmettes that appear as half-palmettes on the front side, but actually are carved on the corners of the trapezoidal facet and continue unto the depth sides of it. These palmettes are framed within a crescent shaped frame the outlined of which is defined by a slightly convex band. The leaves of the palmettes are elongated, narrow and wider at their rounded tips. Below the composition of the palmettes there is a slightly convex "rope pattern" band. This pattern is formed by diagonal incisions. Directly below the "rope pattern" band there is another band of a rare composition of a "zigzag pattern" that is not formed by triangles, but by a bas relief band. The area within the "zigzag pattern", both above and below the band, are filled with round and flat bas relief bosses. The entire composition is framed at the top by a flat, smooth and upright band below which the face of the trapezoidal facet begins to slope inwardly. The bottom the composition is framed by a thin bas relief band that is triangular in section. The decoration terminates a couple of centimeters above the bottom edge of the element.

The decoration of the depth side of the element is not fully similar to that of the front facet. The bottom part of the composition that includes the "rope" and "zigzag" patterns is similar, but instead of a composition of two whole palmettes, here the decoration includes an ornate niche flanked by two half-palmettes. The niche is composed of two thin bas relief bands that form the outline of an arch or half a dome. Above this part of the structure there is a carving of an upside down triangle carved in the same style. The arch or semi-dome stands on two bas relief cylindrical columns. Each column has a rectangular capital and a rectangular base. The shafts of the columns are decorated with diagonal engravings that produce a spiraling effect. Above the niche on either side of its top part there is a bas relief round boss with a round depression in its center. The half-palmette on the right of the niche is the continuation of the half-palmette that appears on the front trapezoidal facet. To the left of the niche, instead of a half-palmette there is only a bas relief crescent shape. This appears to be the basis for a half-palmette that for some reason was not actually fully carved.

The second doorjamb capital that may have originated at the site of Elusa is EL. CP.27 (pl. 301). The front trapezoidal facet can be divided into three different decorated registers. At the top there is a register of high relief triangles alternating between upside-down and upright. The upside-down triangles are solid and marked by thin grooves; probably the craftsman's guidelines. The upright triangles are decorated with a floral engraving composed of diagonal lines that are triangular in section and may represent leaves. Below this register there is a deep and wide groove that is triangular in section. The center register is decorated with a schematic depiction of a vine, grape clusters and leaves. The vine is formed by a wavy band that is further decorated with short and straight lines engraved along it height. From this vine come out, at the bottom, several very schematic grape clusters in bas relief. On them there are engraved lines that form a pattern similar to a "net pattern". Above the curves of the vine tendril there are some leaves with deep grooves that define their veins.

Directly below this register there are two graded engraved bands. The top band is decorated with an alternating pattern of squares and rectangles, defined and separated by vertical grooves. In the center of each square there is a conical, drilled depression. The band below this is decorated by a row of dentils that are vertical, elongated and defined by deep grooves. The decoration ends 2.5cm above the bottom edge of the element. The depth side trapezoidal facet is decorated with nearly the same composition as the front trapezoidal facet with the exception of the middle register. On this side of the capital the middle register is decorated with a deep horizontal groove along its center. This groove is triangular in section and above and below it there are engraved diagonal lines, pointed and wider at their tips. This could be another representation of a schematic floral decoration.

# 2.10 Decorated Architectural Elements from Unknown Sites

#### 2.10.1 Introduction

The present sub-chapter includes 56 architectural elements that originate from the region of the Negev Desert, but whose specific provenance is unknown. These elements have been documented courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. The typology of these artifacts adheres to the same model of the previous architectural elements presented in this catalogue. The elements have been categorized according to their function and the style of the ornamentation. In the case of six of the elements suggestions have been made regarding their site of origin on the basis of stylistic similarities in the decoration. In addition, similarities between architectural elements that may have been paired together have also been noted.

#### 2.10.2 Bases

Six round column bases were documented at the Israel Antiquities Authority's storerooms. Since these bases were not discovered in situ it is not possible to state with any certainty that they are indeed column bases as opposed to column capitals or column drums. All the elements in this group are decorated with lathe-made grooves and two are also decorated with moldings. The bases are carved as monoliths and four are composed of a square plinth above which the body of the base is conical or cylindrical in order to conform to the shape of the column shaft. The first two column bases to be described do not have a square plinth. The column bases will be described in order of complexity.

Column bases NT.BP.57 and NT.BP.58 are both decorated with a very common lathe-made decoration of a series of thin grooves around their circumference. The first column fragment was carved in hard chalk and the second in limestone. This type of lathe decoration frequently appears throughout the Byzantine Negev.

Column base fragment NT.BP.57 is carved as a large monolithic stone that was badly damaged over the course of time (pl.302).<sup>209</sup> This base fragment has a square plinth at the bottom and the column shaft is somewhat conical in shape, with its diameter narrowing towards its top section. At the bottom of the column shaft, just above the badly damaged square plinth, there is a series of ten lathe-made grooves around the circumference of the column shaft. The average thickness of these thin grooves is 0.2cm and the distances between them are not uniform, but range between 0.8cm to 1.3cm. Parts of the lathe decoration are worn and are no longer visible.

The second artifact in this category of decorated architectural elements is a weathered column base, NT.BP.58 (pl. 303).<sup>210</sup> The original direction of this element is unknown and it will be described as it appears in the photograph taken by the Israel Antiquities Authority. At the bottom, the column base is decorated with a thick protruding band in bas relief. There is another similar band 9cm above the first. It seems that the entire area above and between these bands (and also possibly on the bands) was covered with thin lathe-made grooves. These grooves are between 0.2 to 0.3cm thick and the average distance between them is 2cm.

The preservation state of base NT.BP.4 is quite poor (pl. 304). Although the base is broken in several places it is still possible to see that it is composed of a conical body over a square plinth. The conical part of the base is decorated with a series of lathe-made grooves, which are quite weathered and therefore their thickness could not be measured. These grooves are engraved around the circumference of the base

<sup>209</sup> The general measurements of NT.BP.57 are: width of plinth - approximately 35.5cm, depth of plinth - approximately 35.5cm, preserved height - approximately 79cm, due to the poor state of preservation the diameter could not be measured.

<sup>210</sup> The general measurements of NT.BP.58 are: height – 42cm, diameter – approximately 40cm.

at varying distances and some appear to be carved deeper than others. Column base NT.BP.27 is decorated in a very similar fashion to the previously described element and is in a much better preservation state (pl. 305). Three lathe-made grooves are clearly visible around the circumference of the top of the base, but it is possible that there were more since this section of the element is not well preserved. The thickness of these grooves varies and ranges between 0.5cm and 1.9cm.

The third column base, NT.BP.29, is different than the two previously described elements (pl.306). This element has a short square plinth and a round body. It is decorated with moldings similar to attic bases; with upper and lower tori that are separated by a scotia and fillets. It is interesting to note that in the center of the plinth, at the bottom of the base, a channel that is rectangular-in-section is carved. This may indicate that this base stood over a water channel or was possibly used in spolia and was reshaped to fit its new purpose.

The fourth column base, NT.BP.5, has a circular body above a square plinth (pl. **307).** The body of the base is decorated with two bas relief, slightly convex, wide bands carved around the bottom of the element, with a thick gap between them. Although the face of the base is quite weathered, lathe-made engravings are visible around the circumference of the base. This type of composition, of two wide bands, is quite common throughout the Negev.

#### **2.10.3 Lintels**

The category of lintels from unknown sites includes nine architectural elements carved both of chalk and limestone. Nearly all nine items in this group are decorated with compositions in which the motifs of "rosettes" and "whirling-wheels" are a dominant feature. Nevertheless, these compositions are of a variety of styles and levels of execution. The compositions have been further divided according to the type of rosettes that appear in them. These sub categories are: Cross, six-petaled rosettes, six-petaled rosettes and wheel-spoke rosettes and whirling-wheels.

#### 2.10.3.1 Cross

Only one (NT.LT.24) of the nine lintels is decorated with a dominant motif that is not a rosette or a whirling wheel (pl. 308). The lintel appears to be broken at its right edge and therefore the decoration may represent only a third of a larger composition. The decoration is of a cross set within a double bas relief band medallion. The cross fully populates the medallion. The arms of the cross are narrow, shallowly hollowed-out and slightly flared at their ends. In the four quarters created by the arms of the cross there are four different motifs carved in bas relief. In the top left quarter there is a schematic depiction of a grape bunch shaped as an upsidedown triangle with a small tendril coming out of its top. In the top right quarter there is a square shape. In the bottom two quarters of the lintel there are carvings of the letters Alpha and Omega, but interestingly the letters are inverted, with the Omega carved on the left and not on the right. This may be an indication that both the craftsman and the owner of the lintel (if they were not one and the same) were illiterate.

#### 2.10.3.2 Six-Petaled Rosettes

The lintels in this category are further divided into three groups. The first group includes four lintels decorated with compositions of "six-petaled rosettes" and "wheelspoke rosettes". The third and last group is of two lintels decorated with "whirlingwheels and wheel-spoke rosettes". In each group the lintels will be described from the most simplistically to the most complexly decorated.

The first architectural element to be described is lintel NT.LT.27 (pl. 309).<sup>211</sup> This is a chalkstone lintel of which approximately a third was preserved. The ornamentation of this fragment consists of a compass-made "six-petaled rosette" set within a depressed medallion. The petals of the rosette are composed of elongated needle-shapes that are slightly hollowed-out. The tips of the petals are joined together by additional curving bands. The areas within and around the petals are deeply hollowed-out. Therefore, the "rosette" appears to be set within a depressed medallion. There are no other decorations on this fragment of the lintel, but the full composition may have included three inhabited medallions in total. This type of composition is common on lintels found throughout the Negev.

Architectural element NT.LT.13 is also a fragment of what was most likely a lintel (pl. 310). The size of this monolithic limestone and the amount of preserved decoration indicate that nearly half of the lintel was preserved. A small part of the top edge of the element seems to have been intentionally removed, presumably after the lintel was no longer used for its original function. The decoration consists of a "six-petaled rosette" set to one side of the element. The "rosette" is compass-made and the petals have thin, needle-shaped contours that are deeply hollowed-out. The tips of the petals are further connected by a thin curving band that forms triangular shapes between the petals. The rosette is set within a frame of a sunken relief medallion. This medallion is further framed on either side, by deep vertical grooves that form a composition of a medallion set within a solid square frame. In the center of the medallion there is another rosette similar to the rosette previously described. Only about half of this part of the composition is preserved. In the space between the two rosettes there is a wide, slightly convex, molding.

Element NT.LT.25 is an unusually shaped lintel; its overall shape is not fully rectangular, but rounded at one end (pl. 311).212 This architectural element is

<sup>211</sup> Segal (1988), 201.

<sup>212</sup> Segal (1988), 200.

relatively short for a lintel and it may be that it was placed over a smaller opening, such as a window, for example. It is interesting to note that there is a deep and wide concave groove carved into the straight depth side of the element. The decoration of the lintel is carved in high relief and consists of a compass-made "sixpetaled rosette". The petals are elongated needle-shapes with the contours and the areas around them hollowed-out. The spaces between the petals are further decorated with round bosses. The "rosette" is set within a medallion that greatly protrudes from the face of the element. Approximately a third of the lintel (towards the curved end of the element) is decorated with a high relief, schematic volute which somewhat follows the contour of the curved end of the element and takes up most of the space of the composition. Above and to the left of the rosette is of a high relief frame composed of a band that is rectangular in section.

An additional fragmentary lintel that is decorated with a "six-petaled rosette" with needle-shaped petals is element NT.LT.8 (pl. 312).<sup>213</sup> About two-thirds of this lintel may have been preserved. The composition includes, at one end, a high relief medallion composed of a slightly convex band and fully inhabited by a "six-petaled rosette". The petals are elongated needle-shapes with a deep vertical groove in their centers. The tips of the petals are joined by curving bands and the areas around the petals are deeply hollowed-out. At the center of the lintel and the composition, there is a design of a circular "rope pattern" band reminiscent of a wreath motif. The band is convex and covered with diagonal grooves. From this wreath-like motif, towards the rosette two volutes "spring" out. The volutes are schematized and composed of slightly convex bands and the volutes curve away from one another. It is curious that the volutes "spring" out of the side of the medallion or wreath and not from its bottom; this might indicate that the element stood upright and was not a lintel; perhaps it was part of a decorated doorjamb.

# 2.10.3.3 Six-Petaled Rosettes and Wheel-Spoke Rosettes

Lintel NT.LT.29, like the previously described lintel, is decorated with a composition that includes a wreathOlike "rope pattern" medallion (pl. 313). This lintel was carved in chalk and only approximately half of it has been preserved. The decoration includes two inhabited medallions, but it is likely that the complete element was decorated with three medallions. The medallion near the edge of the lintel is composed of a bas relief, slightly convex band and is inhabited with a compass-made "six petaled rosette". The petals are elongated needle-shaped with an additional band connecting their tips together and forming shapes similar to the shapes of the petals, along the contour of the medallion. The areas within and around the rosette are deeply hollowed-out. The bands that form the contour of this motif are triangular in section. In the center of the composition there is a bas relief of a "wheel-spoke rosette". The

<sup>213</sup> Segal (1988), 202.

"spokes" are formed by elongated "petals" with rounded ends that are deeply hollowed-out. In the center of the rosette there is a somewhat flattened boss. This rosette and the "six petaled rosette" are framed within a medallion framed by a "rope pattern band", composed of a slightly convex bas relief band marked with diagonal engravings. An additional "rope pattern" band meanders between the two parts of the composition.

Lintel NT.LT.22 is decorated with a composition that includes three different types of rosettes (pl. 314).<sup>214</sup> This lintel was carved of a relatively wide monolithic slab, most of which was preserved. All parts of the composition were carved in relatively high relief and will be described from left to right. The composition begins with a depiction of a column with a rectangular capital and base set on a type of rectangular-in-section collarino; a cylindrical column shaft decorated with diagonally engraved lines that provide a spiraling effect. To the right of the column there is a compass made "six-petaled rosette" similar to the rosette on the previously described lintel. To the right of this rosette there is a "wheel-spoke rosette" with narrow petalshaped "spokes", rounded at their tips and surrounding a flattened boss. The overall shape of this rosette is concave with the "spokes" carved in higher relief at their tips than towards the center of the rosette. Just to the right of the "wheel-spoke rosette" there is a relief of a conch type niche. The dome of the niche is carved as a schematized scallop-shape, somewhat similar to the shape of the "wheel-spoke rosette" to its left. The conch is "set" above two high relief columns. The shaft of the column on the left is decorated with horizontal engravings. There is only one horizontal engraving towards the top of the shaft of the column on the right, which may have defined the capital of the column. In the niche there seems to have been an engraving of a "Latin cross", with thin flared arms, that has been damaged. The percussion marks only appear on the outline of the cross indicating that the cross may have been damaged in an act of iconoclasm. To the right of the niche there is a high relief of a schematic "whirling-wheel". The "spokes" of this rosette are uneven in length and set around a flattened boss. The overall execution of the decoration appears inexact. The rest of the lintel is broken and therefore it is impossible to ascertain if the composition of the decoration was symmetrical or not.

Lintel NT.LT.9 is decorated with a composition that includes rosettes and "wheelspoke rosettes" (pl. 315).<sup>215</sup> This limestone lintel is nearly complete, but is very weathered and therefore some of the decoration is no longer visible. Nevertheless, it is clear that the overall composition is of three inhabited medallions, with an ornate band intertwined between them. The medallion on the left hand side of the lintel is formed of a thin band of dentils followed by an ornament of "duo-glyphs" and "metopes". The "duo-glyphs" are formed by two vertical bands; one made of three dentils, one on top

<sup>214</sup> Segal (1988), 196.

<sup>215</sup> Segal (1988), 197.

of the other, and another, an undecorated vertical band. The "metopes" are two concentric circles, the outer thinner than the inner solid circle. The band is bordered on the outside and inner part of the medallion by two slightly convex bands. This band is very similar in its design and style of composition to part of the decoration appearing on base SH.P.3.BP.47 from the South Church complex at Shivta (pl. 15). The medallion is inhabited by a slightly concave "wheel-spoke rosette". The petals of the rosette are thin, elongated, with rounded tips and are deeply hollowed-out. In the center of the rosette there is a large round, bas relief, boss. The center medallion is composed of many ornate frames. The outer most is formed by a bas relief "rope pattern" band set between two slightly convex bands. This is followed by a bas relief of an upright square frame overlapped by another square frame, set at a 45-degree angle. Within this frame there is another smaller medallion composed of two adjacent bands; the outer of bosses, and the inner of a slightly convex band. The area left within the inner most medallion is inhabited by a schematic "wheel-spoke rosette" with "spokes" that are defined by a groove and left solid. The area around the "wheel-spoke rosette" is deeply hollowed-out.

The medallion on the right side of the lintel is broken and very weathered. The decoration of its frame cannot be discerned, but it seems to have also been inhabited with a "wheel-spoke rosette" similar to the one inhabiting the medallion on the left side of the composition. The band that intertwines between the medallions is composed of two adjacent bands; the top one of dentils, and the bottom one, is a slightly convex band. The lintel is the most ornate of all the lintels previously described. The similarity in the style of some of the motifs carved on this element to the ornamentation on decorated elements from Shivta raises the hypothesis that the original provenance of this element is from this site.

#### 2.10.3.4 Whirling-Wheels

Lintel NT,LT,26 is decorated with a composition that includes two medallions inhabited with "whirling-wheels" (pl. 316). This chalk stone lintel is partially preserved and is broken into three large sections that can be pieced together. The composition is of three bas relief medallions. The center medallion is composed of a slightly convex band that is framed by a wreath engraved as a thick band with a "fishbone pattern". The pattern is created by "arrowhead-like" engravings that point downwards on either side of the medallion. The medallion is inhabited by an ornately engraved "Greek cross". The arms of the cross are rectangular and slightly flared at their ends. In each arm there are is a curving of a concentric shape that follows the contour of the arm. In the center of the cross the arms do not intersected, but form a solid square in which a round boss is carved defined by a deep groove around it. The four quarters created by the cross within the medallion are

<sup>216</sup> Segal (1988), 204.

not left void, but are filled with rows of engraved squares in a horror-vacui style. Although parts of the lintel are missing it can be discerned that the center medallion is flanked on either side by a "whirling-wheel" ornamentation, set within a medallion and bordered with a groove. The "spokes" of the "whirling-wheel" are carved as elongated petals that are slightly curving and hollowed-out. The tips of the "spokes" are rounded on their inner contour. The tips of the "spokes" are truncated by the groove forming the medallion. In the center of, the better preserved, right "whirling-wheel" there is a round bas relief boss. The three medallions are set close to one another and take up nearly the entire area of the face of the lintel.

# 2.10.4 Capitals

A large group of 27 doorjamb capitals from unknown sites has been documented. Although the variety of the compositions appearing on them is great, they have been grouped into five stylistic categories according to the dominant motif that appears in each composition. The stylistic categories are: molding sequence compositions, zigzag pattern, star-like shapes in frames, schematic palmettes and ornate palmettes. In addition, a varia category was included for two doorjamb capitals that bear compositions and motifs that could not be classified in any other stylistic category.

# 2.10.4.1 Molding Sequence Compositions

Five doorjamb capitals decorated with molding sequences belong to this subcategory. The compositions carved on these elements are of various levels of complexity and execution. The doorjamb capitals will be described from the most minimalistic composition to the most complex.

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.2 is decorated continuously on two sides of its protruding trapezoidal facet and is carved in limestone (pl. 317). The decoration consists of a flat, smooth and upright band under which the face of the element begins to slope inwardly. Just below the center of the trapezoidal facet a composition of four graded bands begins. The measurements of the top three bands are remarkably accurate and consistent. All of these graded bands are 2cm in thickness and each band is 1cm shorter than the band above it. The bands are carved in sunken relief; the bottom band is the most depressed. This band is also incomplete due to the preservation state of the element.

As opposed to the previously described element, doorjamb capital NT.CP.113 is decorated with less accuracy and parts of the decoration seem to have been engraved with a free-hand (pl. 318). This doorjamb capital is carved of limey-chalk as a rectangular ashlar with an ornamented protruding trapezoidal facet on its front side. The top of the protruding trapezoidal facet is not preserved. The top half of the decoration includes a row of large engraved simplistic "X's" three of which are visible. It appears that these "X's" were carved by free-hand. Below the center of the trapezoidal facet the decoration consists of two adjacent, bas relief, convex, horizontal bands with varying measurements. At the very bottom of the composition there may have been a design of a "zigzag pattern", but this part of the element is too weathered for the ornamentation to be discerned.

Element NT.CP.49 is carved in limestone and has two protruding trapezoidal facets that are decorated continuously (pl. 319); both facets are shorter than the height of the element. They begin at the top and end before the bottom of the capital. The decoration begins at the top with a flat, smooth and upright band below which the face of the trapezoidal facets begins to slop inwardly. This band is defined at the bottom by a deep and wide groove. Just below the center of the composition there is a horizontal band that is carved in shallow sunken relief and is triangular in section. This band is followed by a bas relief fillet band, decorated with an engraved "fishbone pattern" consisting of a horizontal line, dividing the band in half. Below and above the horizontal line there are diagonal engravings that form "arrow-head" shapes that point towards the right. There are remnants of red paint on various parts of the decorated area and it is possible that the entire composition was covered by red paint.

The decoration of doorjamb capital NT.CP.40 is guite unique (pl. 320). This architectural element was carved in limey-chalk and has two protruding trapezoidal facets, decorated with a continuous composition. The decoration is also continuous on the depth side of the narrower trapezoidal facet. The ornamentation of the sequence of moldings is carved in high and sunken relief, emphasizing a play of light and shadow. The faces of the trapezoidal facets slope inwardly. The decoration begins at the top with a flat, smooth and upright band followed by two wide concave bands that are followed by a fillet in high relief; below there is a thinner concave band and another fillet in high relief. The horizontal facets end 2.2cm above the bottom edge of the element. The decoration of the trapezoidal facet on the depth side of the capital is less visible due to weathering.

The last doorjamb capital in this sub-category, NT.CP.15, is decorated with a sequence of moldings, reliefs and engravings (pl. 321). The overall shape of the capital is of a rectangular ashlar with a protruding decorated trapezoidal facet. The face of the trapezoidal facet slopes inwardly, but begins with a flat and upright band. This band is decorated with an engraved "zigzag pattern". It is somewhat perplexing that the rest of the ornamentation is finely worked and carved in relief, but the "zigzag pattern" is crudely incised. This may lead to the suggestion that the carving of the decoration of this element was not completed; especially when we consider the thin and very shallow incisions that make-up the "zigzag pattern". This band is defined at the bottom by a thin groove, which seems to be the craftsman's guideline. Below the top band there is thick section (8cm in height) that is finely worked and is slightly concave. This is followed by a fillet molding in bas relief that has two

deeply incised grooves engraved horizontally dividing it into three thin sections. The fillet is followed by a concave band with a "bead-and-reel" design carved in bas relief in its center. The "bead-and-reel" band is composed of elliptical elongated "beads" and rectangular "reels" alternating. The concave band is followed by another fillet molding sectioned by two deep horizontal grooves followed by another concave band and another sectioned fillet band. The next band in the sequence is a "rope pattern" band. This band is slightly convex and the "rope pattern" is created with diagonal incisions. Next there is another fillet sectioned by two deep horizontal grooves and the decoration ends 2.3cm before the bottom edge of the element, with a band of bas relief, rectangular and elongated dentils. This is one of the more finely worked architectural elements in the assemblage.

## 2.10.4.2 Zigzag Pattern

This sub-category includes three doorjamb capitals that are decorated with compositions in which the "zigzag pattern" motif plays a dominant role; although the design of the decoration of the three capitals is quite varied. Two of the capitals are carved of chalk and one is carved of limestone.

The first doorjamb capital, NT.CP.54, bears the most minimalistic decoration of the three (pl. 322). This element was carved in chalk and has two similarly decorated protruding trapezoidal facets. At the top of the capital the decoration consists of a flat, smooth and upright band defined at the bottom by a thin groove, possibly a guideline. Below this band the face of the trapezoidal facet begins to slope inwardly. The rest of the decoration appears near the bottom of the capital with a band of a "zigzag pattern" carved in bas relief. The area below this band is carved out in sunken relief.

Doorjamb capital, NT.CP.17, is carved in limestone and has two similarly decorated protruding trapezoidal facets (pl. 323).<sup>217</sup> The decoration starts at the top with a smooth and upright band below which the face of the facets begins to slope inwardly. The main part of the composition includes a sequence of high relief bands of a "zigzag pattern", four on the front trapezoidal facet and five on the depth side trapezoidal facet. The triangles that form the "zigzag pattern" are carved so that in each row the apexes of the triangles touch the meeting place of the bases of the two triangles in the row above. The areas around the solid triangles are hollowed-out, thus creating a pleasing play of light and shadow. Below the main part of the composition, at the bottom of the capital, the decoration ends with two graded flat, smooth and upright bands. The triangles forming the "zigzag pattern" all have nearly the same measurements indicating that this design was carefully preplanned.

The last doorjamb capital in this sub-category is NT.CP.35 (pl. 324). This chalk ashlar has two decorated trapezoidal facets. As in the case of the previously

<sup>217</sup> Segal (1988), 225.

described capitals, both trapezoidal facets are decorated with a similar composition. The trapezoidal facets are slightly flared at the top and decorated with a high relief, upside-down, triangle in the center of their top edge, in the fashion of a "Nabatean Capital". At the top of the upside-down triangle there is a flat, smooth and upright band and below it the face of the triangle begins to slope inwardly. The rest of the ornamentation appears at the bottom of the trapezoidal facet and includes two high relief adjacent fillets. Below this double fillet band there is a band of a "zigzag pattern" composed of upside-down triangles carved in bas relief. The widths of these triangles vary. The decoration ends 2cm above the bottom edge of the element.

# 2.10.4.3 Star-Like Shapes in Frames

This sub-category includes six doorjamb capitals carved both in chalk and limestone. The motifs of "star-like shapes in frames" dominate the decoration of these capitals and, apart from one capital, continually appear in series of threes. It is important to note that four of these doorjamb capitals have been displayed in the former "Negev Museum", located in the city of Be'er-Sheva. When this museum was closed the archaeological artifacts were transferred to storage at the Israel Antiquities Authority, where they are currently located. Two of the capitals bear a striking resemblance to decorated architectural elements at the Byzantine village of Shivta. The overall style of decoration and level of craftsmanship of all of the items in this sub-category is very similar; therefore, it may be suggested that they have all originated from Shivta and have simply been miscataloged along the way. The capitals will be described from the most simplistically to the most elaborately decorated.

Capital NT.CP.112 is carved in chalk as a rectangular ashlar with a protruding decorated trapezoidal facet in its center (pl. 325). <sup>218</sup> The top of the trapezoidal facet is left undecorated. The main part of the ornamentation is carved in high relief in the center of the facet. This part of the composition includes five spaced vertical bands (two near the edges of the trapezoidal facet and three more in the center). The bands are "cut" by a large "X"-shape. The bands that form this composition are triangular in section and the areas around them are hollowed-out. The artisan's guidelines, in the form of thin grooves are still visible on this part of the composition. At the bottom of the capital the decoration consists of a band of a bas relief "rope pattern", composed of thin diagonal grooves that lean to the left. The decoration ends 2cm above the bottom edge of the element. This kind of composition, of vertical bands that are cut by a large "X"-shape is unique and does not appear on any other element the assemblage.

<sup>218</sup> Segal (1988), 207.

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.109 is a rectangular limestone ashlar with a decorated protruding trapezoidal facet (pl. 326).<sup>219</sup> The very top of the trapezoidal facet is damaged, but the main part of the decoration includes two rows of "star-like shapes in frames". The rows are carved one above the other, and in each frame there is a four-pointed "star-like" shape. The contours of the "starts" are formed by bands that are triangular in section and the areas around them are deeply hollowed-out. This ornamentation is defined at the bottom by a deep groove and ends about 2.5cm above the bottom edge of the capital.

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.108 is also decorated with a somewhat minimalistic composition (pl. 327).<sup>220</sup> This element is composed of a rectangular chalk ashlar with a protruding decorated trapezoidal facet, located slightly off-center. The decoration begins at the top with a flat, smooth and upright band under which the face of the element begins to slope inwardly. The main part of the decoration is of two rows of "star-like shapes in frames". There are three "stars" in each row, The arms of the "stars" are composed of bands that are triangular in section. The areas around the "stars" are deeply hollowed-out. Towards the bottom of the trapezoidal facet and below the main part of the composition there is a band of schematic dentils that are simply composed of deep vertical grooves defining their outline. The band is defined at the top and bottom by deep grooves. The rest of the area below this band is left undecorated. The decoration of this doorjamb capital is very similar, apart from one register, to the composition of doorjamb base SH.P.BP.45; located at the entrance from the narthex to the north aisle in the South Church at Shivta. 221

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.14 is carved in limestone and has one decorated protruding trapezoidal facet (pl. 328). Although the element is weathered, the composition of the decoration is still visible and is carved in bas relief. The decoration begins with a band decorated with close-knit diagonal incisions, which are barely visible, forming a "rope pattern" motif. The band is defined at the top and the bottom by thin grooves. Below this band the main part of the decoration is composed of three "star-like shapes in frames". The "star" shapes are four-pointed and their contours are formed by bands that are triangular in section. Just below the center of the trapezoidal facet, and immediately below the main part of the composition, there is a schematic "beads-and-reels" band, composed of alternating, large and wide rhomboids and vertically rectangular "reels". The bottom of the element is quite weathered and may have been decorated with a band of a "zigzag pattern".

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.19 is also decorated with a composition that contains "star-like shapes in frames" and a band of "beads-and-reels" (pl. 329). This capital is carved in limestone and is very weathered, especially its lower section. The

<sup>219</sup> Segal (1988), 226.

<sup>220</sup> Segal (1988), 206.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Segal (1988), 81.

decoration begins at the top with a flat band defined at the bottom by a thin incision; this may have been the artisan's guideline. This band is followed by a band carved in sunken relief and triangular in section; followed by a thin flat band, defined at the bottom by a thin groove. The main part of the composition consists of a row of three "star-like shapes in frames". The contour of the "star-like" shapes is formed by bands that are triangular in section. This part of the decoration is carved in high relief. Here too, the guidelines remain visible in the form of thin grooves. Below this part of the composition there are two thin flat bands that are separated by a groove. They are followed by a band of "beads-and-reels". The "beads" are formed by elongated lozenges and as opposed to the previously described capital, here the "beads" are hollowed-out and are not carved as solid shapes. The "reels" are in the shape of vertical rectangles. The "beads-and-reels" band is framed between two thin flat bands. The bottom third of the decoration is extremely weathered, but it may have been further decorated with thin flat bands carved in bas relief. The decoration of this capital is very similar that of a doorjamb capital published by A. Segal as located in the entrance from the atrium to nave of the North Church. 222 In addition, the ornamentation of two other doorjamb capitals, located at the entrance leading from the atrium to the south aisle in the North Church, appears as a simplified version of the same composition as on the presently described capital.<sup>223</sup> This leads to the suggestion that the provenance of capital NT.CP.19 is from Shivta.

The last doorjamb capital in this sub-category is NT.CP.5 (pl. 330).<sup>224</sup> This hard chalkstone capital has elaborately decorated two protruding trapezoidal facets. These two facets are decorated with the same continuous composition of reliefs. The composition begins with a flat, smooth and upright band below which the faces of the trapezoidal facets begin to slope inwardly. The flat band is followed by a sunken relief band that is triangular in section. The band is defined at the bottom by a thin artisan's guideline. A good portion of the top half of the composition is inhabited by a row of three "star-like shapes in frames". These motifs are six-pointed and are formed by bands that are triangular in section. This is followed by a slightly convex band defined above and below by deep grooves. Below this band there is a "beadsand-reels" band. It consists of alternating "reels", composed of two adjacent vertically carved rectangles, and oval-shaped "beads", that are hollowed-out. The band is framed above, by a slightly convex band that is divided in half horizontally by a thin groove, and at the bottom, by another slightly convex band divided into three parts by two thin horizontal grooves. Approximately 3cm above the bottom edge of the capital there is a band of a bas relief "zigzag pattern" composed of upside-down triangles. A similar although more simplistic composition appears on three doorjamb

<sup>222</sup> Segal (1988), 59.

<sup>223</sup> These two architectural elements are presented in this study as doorjamb capitals SH.N.2. CP.106 and SH.N.2.CP.107; cf. Segal (1988), 58.

<sup>224</sup> Segal (1988), 211.

capitals from the North Church at Shivta (two of which have been previously described in this study).<sup>225</sup>

#### 2.10.4.4 Schematic Palmettes

This sub-category can be paired with the following sub-category of "ornate palmettes"; both of these stylistic groups include doorjamb capitals ornamented predominantly with the motif of palmettes. The present sub-category includes eight doorjamb capitals decorated with schematized and stylized palmettes. These decorated elements are carved both in limestone and chalk and will be presented from the most simplistically to the most complexly decorated.

Doorjamb capitals NT.CP.25 and NT.CP.23 were both carved in limestone and are decorated with very similar compositions (pls. 331-332). These two elements may have been decorated by the same artisan and originate from the same site, and possibly even the same structure. Both capitals have two decorated protruding trapezoidal facets.

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.25 is decorated with the same composition on both of its trapezoidal facets (pl. 331). The decoration starts at the top of the element with a flat, smooth and upright band under which the face of the facet begins to slope inwardly. The main part of the composition is carved in bas relief and includes a palmette flanked by two half-palmettes. The palmette is in the shape of a leaf created by a vertical line in the center and upwards engraved diagonal lines on either side. The individual leaves of the two half palmettes are also engraved as upwardsturning diagonal lines. This part of the composition is framed between two relatively thin flat bands carved in bas relief. Uniquely the band at the top is not continuous and its outline is interrupted by the palmettes. Below the band that frames the palmettes on the bottom there is another band of a "zigzag pattern" composed of upside-down triangles, carved in bas relief.

Capital NT.CP.23 is not decorated with the same composition on both of its trapezoidal facets (pl. 332). The larger, front trapezoidal facet bears the same decoration as previously described on capital NT.CP.25, but the depth side facet, is decorated with a slightly different ornamentation. At the top of this facet there is a flat, smooth and upright band below which the face of the capital begins to slope inwardly. Below this band there is an engraved band, defined at the top and bottom by horizontal thin grooves. The area between the grooves is decorated with a freehand engraving of a wave scroll (also known as a Vitruvian wave or a running dog pattern). This band is cut at either end by two schematic half-palmettes. The palmettes are carved in bas relief and are similar to the previously described palmettes on capital NT.CP.25. As opposed to the decoration on the front face of the capital,

<sup>225</sup> Doorjamb capitals SH.N.2.CP.106 and SH.N.2.CP.107, also see Segal (1988), 58; cf. Segal (1988), 59.

the area between the two half-palmettes does not contain a whole palmette, but a unique motif of a carved rhombus. In the rhombus there are additional engraved concentric rhomboids. From each corner of the outer rhombus an engraved volute emerges, curling towards the rhombus. At the bottom of the trapezoidal facet there is a very weathered band of a "zigzag pattern", carved in bas relief and composed of upside-down triangles.

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.111 is carved in limestone and has two protruding decorated trapezoidal facets (pl. 333).<sup>226</sup> The decoration on both trapezoidal facets is similar and continuous. The ornamentation starts at the top with a flat, smooth and upright band below which the face of the element begins to slope inwardly. The main part of the composition is of two schematized half-palmettes carved in bas relief. The leaves of the palmettes are composed of deeply engraved diagonal lines. Interestingly, if this architectural element functioned as a doorjambs capital, then the diagonal lines on the front side trapezoidal facet were turned downwards. This may indicate that this element was a doorjamb base and not a capital; however, on the depth side trapezoidal facet the diagonally engraved lines on the right halfpalmette and the left half-palmette are turned upwards, as they would normally appear on a doorjamb capital. It is unclear if this deviation in the decoration was made intentionally or if it is a discrepancy of the craftsman. It seems that the two half-palmettes that meet at the corner of the capital "complete" each other in the composition of the decoration. In-between the two half-palmettes, below the top flat band, there is an upside-down triangle carved in very shallow bas relief. Towards the bottom of the capital the decoration consists of a bas relief, slightly convex band, followed by elongated rectangular, schematic dentils, carved in very shallow bas relief. This is followed by an even shallower flat band followed by another, graded, band.

Doorjamb capital NT, CP.28 is carved in chalk, and although it bears a decoration reminiscent of the previously described element, the style and depth of the decoration cause this capital to appear strikingly different (pl. 334). The capital is composed of a rectangular ashlar with a protruding trapezoidal facet. Although, parts of the element are missing the decoration can still be discerned. At the top, the decoration begins with a flat, smooth and upright band defined at the bottom by a groove. Below this band the face of the trapezoidal facet begins to slope inwardly. In the center of the composition there is an engraved compass-made "wheel-spoke rosette" set in a medallion formed by a thin circular groove, possibly a guideline. The "wheel-spokes" of the rosette are in the shape of twelve "wedges", formed by intersecting straight lines, carved across the circle of the "medallion". These "wedges" are defined by deep grooves and the vertical groove that halves the medallion in its center continues more thinly all the way to the top of the medallion, as a guideline left by the artisan.

<sup>226</sup> Segal (1988), 213.

The compass-made "wheel-spoke" rosette is flanked on either side by two halfpalmettes.<sup>227</sup> These are carved in deep sunken relief and are slightly concave, Deeply engraved, diagonal, upturned grooves mark the individual leaves of the palmette. These types of sunken relief half-palmettes are quite unique. Towards the bottom of the element and between the lowest parts of the half-palmette there is a flat band, defined at the top and bottom by deep grooves. Below this band, at the bottom of the capital there is a band of a "zigzag pattern" composed of upside-down triangles carved in bas relief. Although only a small portion of this band remains, it can be discerned that the sides of the triangles are not carved as straight sides, but uncommonly, as curved outwardly.

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.55 is broken nearly in half, with the decoration only on its left side remaining visible (pl. 335). This capital was carved in chalk as a rectangular ashlar with a protruding trapezoidal facet that was most likely decorated on all of its protruding sides. The decoration begins at the top with a flat smooth and upright band defined at the bottom by a deep groove. The ornament that was carved in the center of the capital, in bas relief is barely visible. Its left side follows the "drop-shaped" contour with serrated edges. On the left and probably also on the right, the center motif was flanked by a half-palmette, composed of a relatively thick, bas relief, convex band. Inside this band there are four elongated, thin pointed leaves, whose contour is also formed by convex bands. This half-palmette is completed by another, similar half-palmette carved on the depth side of the protruding trapezoidal facet. There are a few remnants of red paint on the decorated parts of the capital, and it stands to reason that the entire composition might have been decorated by paint.

Two doorjamb capitals that could be paired together are elements NT.CP.34 and NT.CP.22 (pls. 336-337). Capital NT.CP.22 was published by Segal as having been located at the Negev Museum. 228 Currently both of these architectural elements are stored at the storerooms of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Doorjamb capital NT.CP.34 is a fragmentary element with two decorated sides that are trapezoidal in shape (pl. 336). Although the element is quite fragmented it appears that the decoration on both of the trapezoidal facets is continuous. On the front of the capital the composition includes two bas relief half-palmettes that cover most of the face of the capital. The palmettes are composed of clusters of long elongated thin leaves, round at their tips. The leaves are formed by a contour of a slightly convex band. The contour of the half-palmettes is framed by a band of round bas relief bosses. The small area in-between the two palmettes, in the center of the facet, is inhabited by a vertical, uneven band of a schematic "rope pattern", composed of

<sup>227</sup> It is important to note that "wheel-spoke rosettes" appear more commonly on lintels than on capitals.

<sup>228</sup> Segal (1988), 212.

diagonally engraved lines on a bas relief rectangular-in-section band. The right half-palmette on the front side of the capital is "completed" by another similarly designed half-palmette on the depth side of the trapezoidal facet. The small area remaining next to the right edge of the depth side of the capital is further decorated with vertical lines of smaller, palmette-style leaves.

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.22 is decorated with nearly the same design as the previously described capital (pl. 337); although the workmanship seems to be of a slightly lesser quality. The differences in the composition of the decoration between this capital and capital NT.CP.34 is that in the middle of the front facet, in the small area between the two half-palmettes, instead of a "rope pattern" band there is a vertical band composed at its top of a bas relief trapezoidal frame inhabited by a simple "X" shape. Below this design the vertical band is formed of large relatively flat bosses in bas relief. Three of the bosses are one on top of the other, and two adjacent ones at the bottom. On the depth side trapezoidal facet there is only one half-palmette that "completes" the half-palmette on the left side of the front trapezoidal facet. A few centimeters above the bottom edge of the capital there is a bas relief band of elongated rectangular dentils defined by deep vertical grooves. It appears that both of these doorjamb capitals were decorated in the same horror vacui style and may have stood at either side of the same entrance.

The most ornate doorjamb capital in this category of "schematic palmettes" is element NT.CP.33 (pl. 338). This capital has two protruding trapezoidal facets decorated continuously with a design of ornate palmettes and volutes. In the center of the front facet there is a decoration of two, high relief, schematic volutes, similar to an acanthus plant. The bands forming the volutes are further decorated with widely spaced deep grooves. In the space left between the volutes there is a high relief design of two new, upright leaves. In the space left on either sides of the volutes there are two schematized bas relief half-palmettes composed of elongated leaves, rounded at the ends and hollowed-out. Close to the bottom of the capital there is a bas relief fillet band. The depth side of the capital is decorated with a single high relief volute. To the right of the volute there is a carving of a plant shoot and to the left a half-palmette. Here too, there is a bas relief fillet below the main composition.

#### 2.10.4.5 Ornate Palmettes

This sub-category includes three doorjamb capitals decorated with very ornate and well executed palmettes as opposed to the more schematic palmette carved on the capitals of the previous group. Two of the doorjamb capitals are decorated with the same design and level of execution and would have likely been paired together over the same entrance. All of the elements in this category were carved in limestone.

The first doorjamb capital, NT.CP.50, of this sub-category has two similarly decorated protruding trapezoidal facets (pl. 339).<sup>229</sup> At the top of the facets there is a bas relief fillet under which the faces of the facets slope gently inwards. The main part of the composition includes two very ornate and well worked halfpalmettes composed of cascading clusters of elongated narrow, hollowed-out leaves with rounded tips. In the center of the palmettes there is a description of a bas relief shoot that began to curve slightly at its top end in high relief. The right palmette of the front face and the left palmette of the left face "complete" each other. Below the ornamentation of the palmettes there is another decorated register. These two registers are separated by a high relief band that is triangular in section. The bottom register is decorated with a bas relief composition of a wavy shoot-like convex double band and in the space left by the band there are depictions of grape bunches and leaves. Interestingly, this part of the decoration of the element is very similar in style and execution to the decoration on the lower part of doorjamb capital BS.CP.7 from Be'er-Sheva. Therefore, it could be suggested that element NT.CP.50 also originated from the same location.

The two other capitals in this sub-category, NT.CP.8 and NT.CP.21, are both carved in limestone and bear nearly the same decorational composition (pls. **340–341).** The differences between these capitals are in their overall sizes and the top part of the decoration. The decoration of doorjamb capital NT.CP.8 begins with a flat, smooth and upright band followed by a sunken relief band that is triangular in section (scalene triangle). This sunken relief band is bordered on top and bottom by thin grooves. The top part of the decoration of capital NT.CP.21 is less ornate and only constitutes a flat, smooth and upright band. Below this the decoration of both of these capitals is the same.

The main part of the composition is of a whole ornate palmette flanked by two ornate half-palmettes. The palmettes are carved in bas relief and are formed by cascading elongated narrow leaves that are hollowed-out and have rounded tips. The overall shape of the half-palmettes is concave, giving the capital a fluted appearance at the top. The two half-palmettes that are adjacent form a type of, almost three-dimensional palmette at the corner of the capital. Below the composition of the palmettes towards the bottom of the capital there is a bas relief, slightly concave band of a "rope pattern" decoration, formed by diagonally incised grooves. This band is bordered at the top and the bottom by two thin bas relief fillets. A greater portion of the lower part of capital NT.CP.21 is left undecorated than on capital NT.CP.8. This may be due to the differences in the overall size and shape of these two doorjambs capitals.

#### 2.10.4.6 Varia

Two doorjamb capitals could not be classified in the above defined categories. Both capitals are decorated with compositions that include unique motifs. The first doorjamb capital is carved of chalk and the second is carved of limestone.

Doorjamb capital NT.CP.13 is decorated only on its front side (pl. 342).<sup>230</sup> Although the edges of the facade of the capital are damaged and chipped, it seems that the decorative composition was set within a frame; carved around the top and both sides of the capital. The frame is composed of flat and smooth bands; the band at the top of the capital is the thickest. The area within the frame is decorated with a design formed by two concentric, baseless, upright triangles that are intersected by two similar, concentric, upside-down triangles. The areas between the bands that form the decoration are deeply hollowed-out, giving the design a high relief appearance. The overall shape of this capital is, uniquely, not trapezoidal but rectangular.

The second doorjamb capital in this sub-category, NT.CP.24, is decorated with a continuous design on both of its protruding trapezoidal facets (pl. 343). The composition is divided into three registers; the top one is the thickest and the bottom the shortest. At the center of the top edge of the element there is a high relief of a hemispherical shape. On either side of this shape there are two bands that are rectangular in section. These bands spring from either corner of the top edge of the element and converge at the center of the capital. Above the center register of the composition, there is a band of an engraved "fishbone pattern". The engraved "arrowheads" that form the pattern are set in groups that point away from the center of the register and form a rhombus shape in its center. This register is bordered at the top by one slightly convex, bas relief band, and two similar bands at the bottom. The lowest register of the composition is of a bas relief "zigzag pattern" made of upside-down triangles with slightly curved sides. The decoration on the depth side of the capital is continuous. It is similar to the lower two registers of the composition on the front side of the element, while the top part of the depth side remains undecorated.

#### 2.10.5 Cornices

Three cornices with minimalistic decorations were documented at the Israel Antiquities Authority's storerooms. The first was carved of chalk and the others of limestone. Although the designs of the decoration of the three cornices are different, these types of ornamentations on cornices are common throughout the Negev.

The most simplistic design appears on cornice NT.CR.40 (pl. 344). This chalk stone cornice is in the shape of a regular trapezoid with three decorated facets. The

decoration is continuous and includes a flat, smooth and upright band. Below this band the facets on all three sides of the cornice slope inwardly. The decoration continues at the bottom with another flat, smooth and upright band that is carved in sunken relief. The craftsman's hewing marks are visible on all sides of the element apart from the back side, which was left crudely worked.

Cornice NT.CR.9 is in the shape of a trapezoid with one side carved at a right angle (pl. 345). The two trapezoidal sides of the element are decorated continuously with a flat and smooth upright band at the top, under which the face of the element begins to slope inwardly. At the bottom of the two trapezoidal facets the ornamentation consists of two graded, flat, smooth and upright bands carved in sunken relief. The lower band is more depressed than the one above it.

Although cornice NT.CR.39 is decorated with a minimalistic decoration the design of the reliefs appearing on it are, in part, unique (pl. 346). This element is carved in the shape of a regular trapezoid with three decorated sides. The decoration begins with the typical motif of a flat and smooth upright band at the top and below it the three faces slope inwardly in a relatively acute angle. At the bottom of the trapezoidal facet, uniquely, there is a protruding fillet molding in high relief. This fillet is somewhat trapezoidal in section. Below the fillet molding the three decorated sides of the cornice are rectangular in shape and are left undecorated for another 2cm. It is interesting to note that on the left and right decorated depth sides of the cornice the decoration only covers part of the face of the element. The reason may be that there was no need to decorate sections that would have been unseen.

#### 2.10.6 Arches

Five individual arch segments were documented; of these three, are part of the same arch and two are distinctly different, individual voussoirs. Four of the voussoirs were carved of chalk and a fifth of limestone.

The three voussoirs that were part of the same arch, NT.AR.8, NT.AR.9 and NT. AR.10, are relatively small, chalk stone, arch segments that were probably originally part of an arch, located above a niche (pl.347-349).<sup>231</sup> Although the voussoirs are in a varied state of preservation, it is clearly visible that their decoration is continuous. A comparison of the measurements of the various components of their decoration shows that the ornamentation is uniform and that the differences in size between the motifs, among the three voussoirs, are no more than a centimeter.

Each of the arch segments is decorated with the same sequence of moldings. At top a flat, smooth and upright band defined at the bottom by a deep groove. This band is followed by a convex band which is also defined at the bottom by a deep groove.

<sup>231</sup> Segal (1988), 230.

Next there is a larger concave band that is more depressed towards its bottom. The combination of the convex band above the taller concave band gives the impression of a cyma reversa molding, but the groove in-between these two bands somewhat interrupt the continuity of the decoration. At the bottom of the voussoirs, as part of a further depressed register, the decoration becomes more three-dimensional and continues below the face of the arch segment, in free relief. In the center there is a vertical band that is needle-shaped, flanked on either side by two quarter-leaf shapes that look somewhat like drawn curtains. On the front of this part of the decoration and on the undecorated depth sides of the voussoirs there are toothed-chisel marks. This small arch is quite ornate and is carved in a very different style than other arches that have been documented. Therefore, no suggestion can be made as to its original provenance.

Arch segment NT.AR.3 is also decorated with a sequence of moldings, but is slightly larger than the previously decorated voussoirs and is carved in limestone (pl. 350).<sup>232</sup> The sequence of the architectural moldings from top to bottom is: a fillet followed by a deep and wide gap, a narrower fillet molding, a slightly depressed convex band, a fillet molding, a deep concave band, a narrower fillet, a band that is triangular in section and the sequence of moldings culminates with two graded fillets towards the intrados of the arch. The limestone from which the arch was carved in quite grey and porous and the element is more weathered towards the bottom of its front decorated face.

The last voussoir in this group of architectural elements is NT.AR.1 (pl. 351). This is a wedge-shaped arch segment similar in form to a keystone and carved in chalk. The decoration appears on its front, narrower side. The decoration begins with a flat band in a slightly sunken relief below this band the main part of the face of the element is taken up by a decoration of a bas relief "net pattern", composed of thin bands that are bordered on all four sides with a frame composed of thin flat bands. The bottom part of the voussoir is decorated with a sequence of a band of schematic square-shaped dentils, a convex band, a quite weathered band of square-shaped schematic dentils and at the very bottom another convex band.

#### 2.10.7 Decorated Stones of Undefined Architectural Context

The present category includes six architectural elements whose original function cannot be determined with any certainty. These elements can be divided into three groups on the basis of the style of their decoration. The first group includes a single element decorated with a sequence of moldings. The second group includes three

**<sup>232</sup>** Voussoir NT.AR.3 measures: width – 39.2–44.3cm, depth – 12.3–15.8cm, height – 26.2cm; as opposed to voussoirs NT.AR.8, NT.AR.9 and NT.AR.10 whose average general measurements are: width - 12-33.2cm, depth - 10.7-17.2cm, height - 25.2cm.

flat slab-like stones decorated with engraved crosses. The last group contains square-shaped ashlars decorated with ornate "rosette" inhabited medallions. One architectural element in this category was carved of limestone and the rest of chalk.

#### 2.10.7.1 Molding Sequence

Architectural element NT.UC.17 is a fragment of a chalk stone rectangular ashlar decorated with a sequence of moldings (pl. 352). Along one of the longitudinal sides of the element there is a rectangular section carved out of the stone. The hewing marks created by a toothed-chisel are visible on this section of the stone. The main part of the element, along its longer side, is decorated with a sequence of moldings composed of a slightly convex wide band set between two bas relief fillets. The shape and fragmentary state of preservation of this element make it difficult to determine its original function, but the style of the decoration suggests that it may have been a part of a doorjamb or the decoration around a smaller opening, such as a window.

#### 2.10.7.2 Engraved Crosses

The second group in this category includes three slab-like rectangular stones, two of which were carved in chalk, NT.UC.3 and NT.UC.12 and a third of limestone, NT. UC.1 (pls. 353–355).<sup>233</sup> All three elements were decorated with engravings of similar "Greek crosses". A comparison of the measurements, both of the ashlars and the engraved decorations, show that they are all carved in roughly the same size. The similarities in the style of the decoration and the measurements, may indicate that they were all carved during the same period by the same craftsman and may have been also originated from the same site. On all three architectural elements the contour of the crosses is formed by a flat band created by two paralleling deep grooves. All three elements are quite weathered, but part of the decoration within the arms of the crosses is visible. The arms of the "Greek crosses" of NT.UC.3 and NT.UC.12 are further decorated with a design of a "rope pattern" formed by engraved diagonal lines. The decoration within the arms of the cross on element NT.UC.1, however, is different and is formed by an engraved "fishbone pattern". It is interesting to note that a stone with a similar, though slightly more complex decoration, appears as a decorated building block located in the wall of the Byzantine citadel at Oboda. 234 Therefore it is possible that these decorated stones were used for a similar function, if not at Oboda than at one of the other Byzantine settlements.

<sup>233</sup> All three decorated elements were previously published. For NT.UC.3 see Segal (1988), 232. For NT.UC.12 see Segal (1988), 233. For NT.UC.1 see Segal (1988), 231.

<sup>234</sup> Element OD.1.UC.22 in our catalogue; cf. Negev (1997), 99 (photo 143).

#### 2.10.7.3 Six-Petaled Rosettes

This sub-group includes two square-shaped chalk ashlars, NT,UC,9 and NT,UC,10

(pls. 356-357). Both elements are decorated with an identical ornamentation indicating that they were probably carved by the same artisan and come from the same provenance. The decoration consists of a medallion inhabited with a "six-petaled rosette". The frame of the medallion is composed of an engraved band of squareshaped dentils that are defined by thin grooves. Following this band there is an additional thinner band, about 0.5cm in thickness and slightly convex. The rosette within the medallion is finely carved and compass-made. The petals are elongated, needleshaped, with additional curving bands connecting the tips of the petals. This forms areas that are the same shape as the petals along the inner circumference of the frame of the medallion. The petals of the rosette and the similarly shaped areas along the inner circumference of the medallion are covered with remnants of red paint. Similarly carved architectural elements ornamented with medallions, inhabited with "six-petaled rosettes", are located as part of the decoration of engraved pilasters in the outer, northern wall, of the Eastern Church at the Mampsis.<sup>235</sup>

# 3 The Trim: A Catalogue of Motifs

# 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the direct discussion of the ornamentation of the architectural elements can begin. Although, in the discipline of archaeology, the types of architectural members presented in this study are often published under the heading of "architectural decorations", it is fitting to define more accurately the terms "decoration" and "ornamentation" as they are discussed in the field of the history of art. The subject of defining ornamentation was analyzed by J. Trilling in his book "The Language of Ornament". Trilling, discussed the various meanings of ornamentation throughout the ages, from prehistory to modern times, as well as, offering a classification system of ornaments, based both on the style of the motifs, their application and the influence on them by their makers and patrons.

Although, Trilling discusses ornamentation and stresses that its main purpose is pleasure<sup>4</sup> he does not provide a clear distinction between ornamentation and decoration. The two terms often appear to be interchangeable. This point was stressed by J. Massey and a distinction between the two terms offered:

"While ornament and decoration often have different meanings, with the former reserved for elements that clarify underlying form and the latter describing unrelated additions, or the former indicating socially meaningful elaboration and the latter designating less significant patterns, these distinctions are not stable or consistently observed."

In essence, on the basis of the above definitions it is suggested that the architectural decorations of the Negev are both ornamental and decorational. They are created for their aesthetic value, but also contain further meaning that transcends their mere design.<sup>6</sup>

Motifs are the ornamental and decorational components that make up a composition. For the purposes of this study the ornaments or motifs range from the most minimalistic upright, flat and smooth band to carved faunal or figurative decorations. A motif is either engraved or carved in relief; when it is a pattern repeated along a singular band, it is defined as a single-motif pattern (e.g. a "dentils pattern").

<sup>1</sup> All photographs in this chapter were taken by the author, except for the figures labeled: Eagle with Outstretched Wings (p. 173) and Shivta – SH.CP.51 (p. 181). These were provided courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. All figures were adapted by Patrice Kaminiski.

<sup>2</sup> For this reason, I have used the terms "architectural decoration" and "decoration" throughout the book.

<sup>3</sup> Trilling (2001).

<sup>4</sup> Trilling (2001), 14.

<sup>5</sup> Massey (2013), 498.

<sup>6</sup> The meaning of the decoration is analyzed in Chapter V.

The most common and the most unique motifs in the assemblage are presented in this chapter, divided into style and subject matter into the following seven groups: geometric motifs; rosettes; floral motifs; faunal motifs; architectural motifs; object-type motifs and figurative motifs. In the case of the geometric motifs, only motifs that appear three times or more have been classified. In most categories, an illustrated example of the discussed motif is provided, with the exceptions of the faunal and figurative categories, where all of the types are presented in an illustrated and photographed form. The examples of the motifs are illustrated in blue over a photograph in order to provide a greater sense of their image and original placement on the architectural element.

This chapter is divided into several sub-chapters: in the first, Catalogue of the Motifs, motifs are divided according to a stylistic-based typology and presented from the least to the more complex. In each stylistic category, an exact count is presented of the individual number of times that a motif-type appears in the assemblage in general as well as a count of how many times the motif appears on different types of architectural elements. The second sub-chapter, Distribution of the Motifs, presents the distribution of the motifs within the whole assemblage and the different stylistic categories. The third and last sub-chapter, A Comparative Study of the Zigzag Pattern, presents a suggested model for a unique comparative study of the measurements of all components of one of the most common motifs in the assemblage.

# 3.2 Geometric Motifs

# Totals: 22 types of geometric motifs appearing 1286 times on 692 architectural elements of all types

Geometric motifs compose the largest group of ornaments in the assemblage. Geometric motifs appear both as an individual decoration and as part of a more complex design. In fact, there is scarcely a complex composition that does not contain a combination of various types of geometric motifs. These types of decorations range from engravings to carved reliefs; and from canonical moldings, whose origins can be found as early as the Hellenistic period, to ornaments that did not bear a symbolic significance prior to the Byzantine era. The various types of motifs and their subtypes will be described below from the most minimalistic to the more elaborate forms of ornamentation.

<sup>7</sup> The vast majority of the geometric motifs that have been documented on the architectural elements appear more than three times. Therefore, this catalogue represents a nearly complete collection of geometric motifs. The motifs that were not included have been omitted for their lack in comparative value.

# 3.2.1 Lathe-Made Engravings



**Total 30: on 15 column bases, 8 columns and 7 column capitals** (These engravings were not counted individually but as a group)

Lathe-made engravings are thin grooves applied to the circumference of cylindrical architectural elements such as column bases and capitals. They appear both on the flat surface of the element and on moldings such as bas relief fillets. The lathe-made engravings do not necessarily cover the entire surface of the column base or capital; such is the case with column base SH.P.7.BP.61 from Shivta. Therefore, it is unlikely that these incisions were used in order to help bind any plaster that may have covered the element. In fact, it is quite possible that the columns and their parts were not plastered, as can be observed by the remains of painted red colored decorations that appear directly on the surface of column capital SH.U.CP.103 from Shivta. This column capital is also decorated with lathemade engravings.

These circumference engravings were incised on the elements with the use of lathes, probably similar to ones used in the Roman period to ornament chalk stone vessels, which were commonly used, especially by the Jewish community.<sup>8</sup> It is highly likely that the lathe-made engravings were only used in church decorations as these were the only buildings that employed columns for the support of their ceilings; in private construction the ceilings and roofs of the structures were supported by a system of engaged pilasters from which stone arches sprang. It is likely that lathes were not frequently used and it is possible that they were transported by the church builders from one site to another, as needed.<sup>9</sup>

**<sup>8</sup>** For a discussion and illustrations of various types of Roman period lathes see: Magen (2002), 118–131.

**<sup>9</sup>** I would like to thank Dr. Haim Goldfus and Prof. Yoram Tsafrir for the fruitful discussions regarding this matter.

### 3.2.2 Upright Band



# Total 233: on 19 different doorjamb bases, 63 different doorjamb capitals and 51 different cornices

The upright band is one of the most common motifs in the assemblage. This motif is carved as a flat, smooth and upright band and it is an engraved decoration that defines the shape of various architectural elements. On most of the doorjamb bases in the assemblage the upright band appears at the bottom of the protruding trapezoidal facet, truncating its sloping face. In a similar way, the upright band appears at the tops of the protruding trapezoidal facets of most of the doorjamb capitals as well; below the upright band the face of the trapezoidal facet begins to slope inwardly. 10 Interestingly, the top upright band forms part of the shape of all of the engaged pilaster type – cornices in the assemblage.

#### 3.2.3 Fillet



Total 280: on 22 different bases, 9 different column drums, 41 different capitals, 8 different cornices and 17 different arch segments

The fillet is a molding of a narrow band that is rectangular in section and in our assemblage appears predominantly in bas relief and occasionally in high relief. The

<sup>10</sup> Some of the doorjamb bases are in a poor preservation state or are located in situ and are not fully unearthed; therefore, they did not factor into the count. Twenty-four of the doorjamb capitals are either poorly preserved or have bands that are decorated with various motifs at the top of their protruding trapezoidal facets.

fillet molding is not commonly used in a solitary fashion and quite frequently appears as part of a sequence of other moldings and carved decorations.

#### 3.2.4 Sunken Fillet



Total 160: on 13 different bases, 3 different column drums, 19 different capitals, 20 different cornices and 3 different arch segments

The sunken fillet is a molding defined as a flat and upright band that is carved in sunken relief. The sunken fillet may appear as a single motif, in repetition, or as part of a sequence of other moldings. Sunken relief moldings are most common on minimalistic decorated engaged pilaster cornices, where they appear on the bottom of the element.

# 3.2.5 Slightly Concave Band



Total 13: on 1 doorjamb segment, 3 different capitals and 3 arch segments

The slightly concave band is defined as a band that is less than hemispherical in section, and is therefore only slightly concave. This motif most frequently appears together with other motifs and is carved in thicknesses ranging from a few centimeters to less than a centimeter.

# 3.2.6 Slightly Convex Band



Total 114: on 15 different bases, 1 column drum, 20 different capitals, 1 cornice and 4 different arch segments

The slightly convex band is defined as a band that is less than hemispherical in section, and is therefore only slightly convex. This motif predominantly appears alongside additional moldings and carvings. Most frequently it is carved in bas relief and may appear as a band that is a few centimeters thick or as a thin band that is less than a centimeter in thickness.

# 3.2.7 Vertical, Slightly Convex Band



Total 25: on 4 doorjamb bases, 6 different doorjamb segments, 12 different capitals and 1 arch segment

The vertical, slightly convex band is similar in some respects to the slightly convex band molding, but it is a vertical rather than a horizontal decoration. It is interesting to note that it is carved only on doorjamb bases from Nessana, only on doorjamb capitals from Mampsis and only on doorjambs from Shivta. Frequently in the center of the molding, halving the motif vertically, the craftsman's mark is visible in the form of a very thin, between 1–0.5mm thick, groove.

# 3.2.8 Vertical Triangular Band



Total 4: on 4 different doorjamb segments

This motif is a band that is carved along the vertical axis of doorjamb segments and is triangular in section. In all four cases this motif appears as part of a sequence of moldings. Vertical triangular bands are part of the ornamentation of doorjamb segments from Shivta and Mampsis.

# 3.2.9 Scotia Molding



# Total 5: on 5 different bases

The scotia molding is defined by a deeply concave band that is not symmetrical in section. There are few moldings of this type; on three column bases, and interestingly also, on a pair of doorjamb bases from Mampsis.

# 3.2.10 Torus Molding



# Total 23: on 14 different bases

The torus molding is a convex band that is semi-circular in section. The torus is carved typically on column bases in high relief and in our assemblage appears mainly on column bases from the churches of Oboda.

#### 3.2.11 Ovolo Molding



# Total 8: on 1 cornice and 5 arch segments

The *ovolo* molding is a three-quarter circle in section. The six architectural elements that bear this molding are all from Shivta and although they are not located *in situ*, they may have originated in the churches of the settlement.

# 3.2.12 Rope-Pattern Band





**Total 40:** on 5 different doorjamb bases, 2 different lintels, 1 column drum, 13 different doorjamb capitals, 2 different cornices and 3 different arch segments The "rope pattern" motif ornaments a relatively large variety of architectural elements. Its carving and engraving is executed in a variety of fashions and levels of complexity. The "rope pattern" band may appear as a flat band on which diagonal lines are engraved in its most schematic form, or as deep diagonal grooves

engraved on a slightly convex band, in a more three-dimensional manner. This motif may appear as part of the frame of a medallion – a frame that is inhabited by an additional composition, or as part of a sequence of moldings and other carvings.

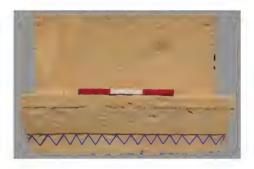
#### 3.2.13 Dentils



Total 41: on 4 different doorjamb bases, 1 lintel, 2 different column drums, 11 different doorjamb capitals, 1 cornice and 6 arch segments

The "dentils" motif is defined by rows of either rectangular or square shapes. Like the "rope pattern" motif "dentils" appear on a large variety of architectural elements and are carved in varying degrees of execution. They may be carved as a flat band with vertical engravings that define the dentils, or as rows of bas relief rectangles or squares. "Dentils" may form medallions, ornament the contour of other motifs such as crosses, or appear as horizontal bands.

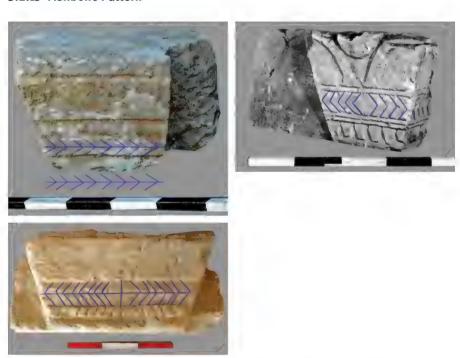
#### 3.2.14 Zigzag Pattern



Total 102: on 8 different doorjamb bases, 30 different doorjamb capitals, 12 different cornices and 8 different arches

The "zigzag pattern" is one of the most frequently recurring motifs in the catalogue. It is carved as a simple engraving clearly incised in a "freehand" fashion and also in bas and high reliefs. At times this motif is also painted in red, for example as part of the decoration of a niche in the southern end of the narthex of the South Church at Shivta, The "zigzag pattern" appears as a single design, as a repeated molding and as part of a more complex composition. At times the "zigzag pattern" is referred to in scholarly literature as a "dog-tooth" pattern, a term that is not connected to any symbolic meaning which this motif might bear. In a recent publication the term "radiant frieze" was suggested by S. Ćurčić for a similar version of this pattern that commonly appears as part of the decoration of church buildings in Eastern Europe during the Middle Byzantine period. The "radiant frieze" is more commonly depicted as a three-dimensional motif even when painted on a two-dimensional surface. The pattern that is engraved and carved on the architectural elements in this assemblage is a more simplified and two-dimensional decoration. Therefore, it may be suggested that this early version of the "radiant frieze" may be called the "zigzag pattern", as a term that defines this motif according to its appearance and does not bear any symbolic implications.

#### 3.2.15 Fishbone Pattern



Total 20: on 1 lintel, 8 different doorjamb capitals, 2 different cornices and 1 arch segment

The "fishbone pattern" is composed of "arrowhead" shapes that are lined in a row. Infrequently these "arrowhead" shapes are pointing towards the same direction.

<sup>11</sup> Ćurčić (2012), 321. Cf. Negev (1997), 160; Segal (1988), 151.

Most commonly the pattern starts in the middle of the band with two sections of "arrowhead" shapes pointing in opposite directions, towards the outer edges of the face of the element; a rhombus shape is then formed in the center of the pattern. The "fishbone pattern" is either engraved on a flat band or a band that is protruding slightly and is triangular in section. At times a horizontal line is engraved across the center of the pattern; occasionally an additional vertical line is added in the center of the rhombus, forming a cross.

#### 3.2.16 Star-like Shapes in Frames

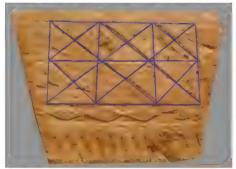
# Total 47: on 9 different doorjamb bases, 2 different doorjamb segments, 2 different lintels, 23 different doorjamb capitals, 2 different cornices and 3 different arch segments

There are two types of "Star-like shapes in frames" that are either engraved or carved in relief. This motif resembles a star when it is carved in relief and hence the name given to it in the present catalogue. The most common sub-type of this motif is the "four-pointed star-like shape". The second sub-type is the "eightpointed star-like shape". Apart from one instance, 12 the "star-like shapes" are set within rectangular frames. This motif never appears singly, but in groups of two, three, four, five, six, eight or nine. At times half a "star-like shape" may be carved to fill a space left within the overall design. The "star-like shapes", both the of four-pointed and the eight-pointed type, have been referred to in scholarship as "X's" and "Union Jacks", and although they may resemble these in shape it is most likely that they have no symbolic connection to either the letter 'X' or the "Union Jack". 13

<sup>12</sup> Doorjamb capital SH.N.2.CP.106 from the North Church at Shivta.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Segal (1988), 151; Negev (1997), i.e. 145, 147 and 160.

# 3.2.16.1 Four-pointed Star-like Shapes in Frames





# Total 38: on 8 different doorjamb bases, 2 different lintels, 15 different doorjamb capitals, 2 different cornices and 3 different arch segments

The "four-pointed star-like shapes in frames" ornamentation appears on a wide range of architectural elements and is either represented schematically as engravings in the shape of the letter 'X' set within a frame, or carved in relief. When the "star-like shape" is carved in relief, the height of the relief and the widths of the arms of the shape increase towards the center of the motif.

# 3.2.16.2 Eight-pointed Star-like Shapes in Frames



Total 13: on 1 doorjamb base, 2 different doorjamb fragments and 4 different doorjamb capitals

The "eight-pointed star-like shapes in frames" motif appears less frequently then its four-pointed counterpart. In contrast to the "four-pointed star-like shapes", it only appears in carved relief in the present assemblage. The motif is carved in such a

way that the height of the relief and the widths of the arms of the shape increase towards the center of the motif.

# 3.2.17 Square and Rhombus Frame



#### Total 6: on 6 different lintels

The present motif is composed of a square and a rhombus that are superimposed. Most commonly the shapes that form this frame are made of bas relief, relatively thin, bands that are slightly convex. In four instances in the assemblage, this motif is frames a medallion that is inhabited by another motif, such as a cross or a rosette. In one instance, on lintel OD.LT.19 from Oboda, the "square and rhombus frame" is more ornate and is not inhabited by additional ornamentation.14

<sup>14</sup> Negev (1997), 179-180 (photos 292-293): Negev interprets this ornament as a depiction of a fortress, basing his hypothesis on the discovery of the element in the vicinity of the citadel. This suggestion is problematic, as there are few similarities between the actual structure and the ornament on the lintel. The citadel is rectangular with square towers, while the ornament in the center of the lintel is square with round loops at the corners and an additional rhombus in its center. In addition, this suggestion does not offer an interpretation for the fragmented motif to the left of the intertwined square and rhombus.

#### 3.2.18 Solar Disk



# Total 6: on 3 different lintels and 1 doorjamb capital

The "solar disk" motif is composed of a semi-circular shape from which straight lines are radiating. This motif appears on three lintels from Mampsis and in all three instances in connection with a cross motif. On two of these lintels the motif is framed with an outer band that follows the semi-circular edge of the design. A schematic "solar disk" is also carved on a protruding lug at the top of a doorjamb capital from Nessana.

#### 3.2.19 Band of Ovals



#### Total 6: on 3 different doorjamb capitals and 1 arch segment

The "band of ovals" motif appears on two paired doorjamb capitals from Shivta and one doorjamb capital from Oboda. In these instances, the band is composed of solid ovals that are lined on their horizontal axis. A "band of ovals" also ornaments an arch segment from Shivta, but here the ovals are lined on their vertical axis and are hollowed-out. The "band of ovals" motif seems to be a simplified version of the "bead-and-reel" motif.

#### 3.2.20 Bead-and-Reel Band







# Total 12: on 1 doorjamb base, 7 different doorjamb capitals and 2 different cornices

The "bead-and-reel" motif ornaments various architectural elements, both in relief and as an engraved decoration. The "beads" are represented as ovals, rhomboids and hexagons; while the "reels" are most commonly depicted as two vertical parallel rectangles, but also as rhomboids. The "bead-and-reel" most frequently appears with other types of motifs, as part of a sequence, but can also be carved as the dominant motif in the composition.

#### 3.2.21 Crosses

# Total 40: on 1 doorjamb bases, 22 different lintels, 3 different column drums and 12 different doorjamb capitals

The vast majority of the crosses in the assemblage are of the "Greek Cross" variety, with arms that have equal lengths. These "Greek crosses" can be divided into two main groups: "Greek crosses with straight arms" and "Greek crosses with flared arms". There are nearly as many crosses of the former type as there are of the latter.

#### 3.2.21.1 Greek Crosses with Straight Arms





# Total 17: on 11 different lintels and 5 different doorjamb capitals

"Greek crosses with straight arms" are engraved and carved in a variety of ways: simple engravings, solidly carved in bas relief, and with contours composed of double bas relief bands. Most "straight armed crosses" are schematic and occasionally the areas between their arms and around the cross are additionally decorated.

#### 3.2.21.2 Greek Crosses with Flared Arms



Total 23: on 1 doorjamb bases, 3 different column drums, 11 different lintels and 7 different doorjamb capitals

Crosses with flared arms are engraved and carved in bas relief. The arms of these crosses are either flared from the center of the cross or only at their ends. Occasionally, the areas within the arms of these crosses are further decorated. The "flared armed Greek crosses" tend to be more ornate then their "straight armed" counterparts.

#### 3.2.22 Medallions

## Total 83: on 49 different lintels and 1 doorjamb capital

There are nine distinct types of medallions ranging from medallions composed of a single engraved, compass-made, circle to more elaborate medallions of a "bead-andreel" motif. Occasionally, the medallions are composed of concentric bands of differing types. All of the medallions are inhabited by a number of motifs but, most commonly, rosettes and crosses. Medallions are part of the ornamentation of nearly all of the lintels in the assemblage and only on one occasion a medallion appears on an architectural element that is not a lintel. 15 The medallions ornament lintels in three types of compositional arrangements: as a single inhabited medallion, as a single inhabited medallion flanked by two other motifs and three medallions that are part of a more symmetrical composition. The nine types of medallions are described from the most simplistic to the most elaborate.

# 3.2.22.1 Single-Band Engraved Medallion



#### Total 10: on 5 different lintels

The "single-band engraved medallion" can be defined as a compass-made thin groove that forms a circle.

<sup>15</sup> Doorjamb capital SH.P.CP.104 from the South Church at Shivta is decorated with an ornate medallion of the "bead-and-reel" type.

#### 3.2.22.2 Medallion in Bas Relief



Total 6: on 3 different lintels

The "bas relief disk medallion" is commonly carved as a bas relief circular shape on which further ornamentation is either engraved or carved in relief.

# 3.2.22.3 Sunken Relief Disk Medallion



Total 7: on 5 different lintels

The "sunken relief solid circle medallion" is typically carved in shallow sunken relief and is inhabited with a carved or engraved motif.

#### 3.2.22.4 Sunken Relief Band Medallion



Total 2: on 2 different lintels

The "sunken relief band medallions" is composed of a circular band that is carved in sunken relief. This type of medallion is the least common type of medallion in the assemblage.

#### 3.2.22.5 Bas Relief Band Medallion



# Total 28: on 16 different lintels

The "bas relief band medallion" is carved as a bas relief circular band that is either rectangular in section or slightly convex. This is the most common type of medallion and at times appears as part of a concentric arrangement with other types of medallions.

#### 3.2.22.6 Double Bas Relief Bands Medallion



#### Total 6: on 5 different lintels

The "double bas relief bands medallion" is a slightly more elaborate version of the previously described medallion type. This medallion is composed of two adjacent, concentric, bas relief bands that are most typically slightly convex in section.

# 3.2.22.7 Rope Pattern Band Medallion



#### Total 11: on 7 different lintels

The "rope pattern band medallion" is a circular band that is covered with diagonal engravings that form a "rope pattern" motif. This type of medallion is either composed of a bas relief band on which the diagonal lines are engraved, or as two concentric engraved bands ornamented with incised diagonal lines.

#### 3.2.22.8 Dentils Band Medallion



# Total 8: on 3 different lintels

This type of medallion is composed of a circular arrangement of square shaped dentils. On the two lintels where this medallion appears it is part of a concentric sequence of "bas relief band medallions" and "dentils band medallions".

#### 3.2.22.9 Ornate Band Medallion



Total 5: on 3 different lintels and 1 doorjamb capital

The most ornate types of medallions belong to this sub-category. These are medallions that are most typically composed of various kinds of bas relief "bead-and-reel" motifs.

### 3.3 Rosettes

# Total 45: on 43 different lintels, 1 doorjamb capital and 1 cornice

This group of motifs includes various types of rosettes that range in design from geometric to floral. The design of this motif being not entirely geometric or floral is the reason why it is in a sub-category of itself. It is in a way, a "missing link" between designs that are purely geometric and those that are more vegetal or floral in appearance. As in the case of most of the previously presented motifs, rosettes appear both simplistically engraved and more elaborately carved in relief. There are four main types of rosettes: "wheel-spoke rosettes", "whirling-wheel rosettes", "six-petaled rosettes" and "four-petaled rosettes". Rosettes appear predominately on lintels, where most commonly they are part of a symmetrical composition in which they flank a central motif. Occasionally the rosettes that appear on either side of a composition are of two different types, but more commonly they are typologically similar.

# 3.3.1 Simple Wheel-Spoke Rosettes



Total 13: on 6 different lintels, 1 doorjamb capital and 1 cornice

"Wheel-spoke rosettes" are the most schematic type of rosettes. The "spokes", which are the main characteristic of this motif, appear as engraved radial lines or carved in bas relief. When the "spokes" are carved in relief they are either rectangular or triangular in section. The engraved "wheel-spoke rosette" is commonly framed by an engraved circle, while the bas relief rosette is either framed by an engraved circle, a bas relief band, or a "rope pattern" medallion. At times this motif has a bas relief boss in its center and resembles a wagon wheel in appearance.

#### 3.3.2 Petaled Wheel-Spoke Rosettes



Total 7: on 6 different lintels

The "petaled wheel-spoke rosette" is similar to the previously described motif, but is more floral in its design. The "spokes" are generally carved as elongated, long hollowed-out petals. Frequently in the center of the rosette there is a round bas relief boss. This rosette is bordered by the same types of frames that encircle the bas relief "simple wheel-spoke rosette".

# 3.3.3 Whirling-Wheel Rosette



Total 5: on 3 different lintels

The "whirling-wheel rosette" is one of the least common rosette types. It is similar to the "wheel-spoke rosette", but is more dynamic in its design. The "spokes" are curved and closely carved. The "whirling-wheel rosette" is usually framed by a bas relief band medallion.

# 3.3.4 Six-Petaled Rosette



Total 2: on 2 different lintels

The "six-petaled rosette" is a rare and more simplified version of the "six-petaled rosette" that is framed by segments. It is carved only on two lintels, both times in bas relief. It is compass-made with lozenge-shaped leaves that are either solid or hollowed-out.

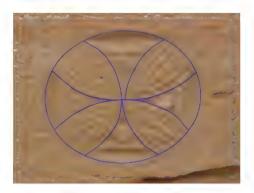
#### 3.3.5 Six-Petaled Rosette - Framed by Segments



#### Total 15: on 12 different lintels

The "six-petaled rosette" that is framed by segments is by far the more common type of "six-petaled rosette" and is the most common rosette type in general. Most frequently it is carved in bas relief with narrow lozenge-shaped petals that are either solid or hollowed-out. In between the tips of the petals, and following the inner contour of the medallion that frames the rosette, there are segments that mimic the shape of the petals and are solid or hollowed-out; usually in-keeping with the style of the rosette.

#### 3.3.6 Four-Petaled Rosette



Total 3: on 3 different lintels

The "four-petaled rosette" is compass-made and its sections are formed by intersecting half circles. The tips of the petals, in all cases, are truncated by the medallion that frames the rosette. The truncation of the petals is a deliberate part of the design, as can be seen by the cross shape that is formed in the void left by the petals. The petals and the cross are either left undecorated or are emphasized by further ornamentation.

# 3.4 Floral Motifs

# Totals: 3 types of floral motifs appearing 133 times, mainly on doorjamb capitals, but also on doorjamb bases, lintels and column drums.

The most common floral motifs can be divided into three main types: "palmettes", "trefoil leaves" and "vine scrolls and grape clusters". These are engraved and carved in a great variety of styles, from very schematic to relatively three-dimensional and naturalistic. In general, floral motifs appear 80% less frequently than geometric motifs. This is not necessarily an indication that these types of ornaments have a diminished significance. The analysis of the geometric motifs has shown that the more elaborate motifs appear less frequently than the more minimalistic ones. Therefore, it is not surprising that the floral motifs, which are often more dominant in size and more complex in design, appear in small quantities in the assemblage. In addition, the fact that floral motifs tend to appear more often on the types of architectural elements that are placed higher within the structure may indicate that these types of motifs possess a symbolic significance.<sup>16</sup>

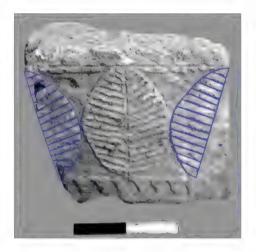
#### 3.4.1 Palmettes

# Total 117: on 3 different doorjamb bases and 38 different doorjamb capitals.

Palmettes are the most common floral motif and interestingly they are engraved and carved nearly exclusively on doorjamb capitals. These motifs are depicted either as half-palmettes or as whole ones and in a style ranging from a schematic leaf-like engraving to a three-dimensional carving that resembles the foliage of the acanthus plant. They may appear as two half-palmettes either flanking a whole palmette or a different type of motif. They are typically carved on the front sides of doorjamb capitals, or on the depth side of the element as a single, half-palmette. When there is a single half-palmette on the depth side of the architectural element it is always depicted near the edge that forms a corner with another half-palmette on the front side of the capital. In the following description the palmettes have been divided into four sub-types: "engraved half-palmettes", "carved half-palmettes", "engraved whole palmettes", and "carved whole palmettes".

<sup>16</sup> The possible symbolic significance of these motifs will be discussed in Chapter V.

# 3.4.2 Engraved Half-Palmettes



Total 37: on 11 different doorjamb capitals

The "engraved half-palmettes" are the most schematic version of this type of motif. Quite often the ornamentation resembles generic looking leaves more than the foliage of the acanthus plant or a palm branch. In all but two instances the "veins" of the palmettes are engraved diagonally in an upwards trajectory.<sup>17</sup> The palmettes' outlines are either framed by a thin groove or a more ornate border of a bas relief band, which is sometimes further ornamented.

#### 3.4.3 Carved Half-Palmettes



Total 55: on 16 different doorjamb capitals and 3 different doorjamb bases

The "carved half-palmette", like the "engraved half-palmette", is most commonly carved on doorjamb capitals. It is more naturalistic in its design than the "engraved half-palmette". These types of "half-palmettes" are carved in bas relief. The sections of the palmette are depicted as narrow, elongated and hollowed-out. Most frequently these types of half-palmettes are framed by a bas relief band that follows their contour.

<sup>17</sup> On doorjamb capital SH.CP.18 from Shivta and doorjamb capital NT.CP.111 (which may have also originated from Shivta, as it is similarly ornamented) the diagonal lines are engraved in a downwards trajectory, but this could simply be an anomaly in the design.

# 3.4.4 Engraved Whole Palmettes



Total 7: on 5 different doorjamb capitals

"Engraved whole-palmettes" are the least common type of palmettes. These schematically engraved whole palmettes tend to be depicted flanked by two halfpalmettes of the same kind.

#### 3.4.5 Carved Whole Palmettes



Total 18: on 6 different doorjamb capitals

The "carved whole palmette" is a more naturalistic version of the "engraved whole palmette" and likewise may appear flanked by two half-palmettes of the same type. This type of palmette most resembles the foliage of the acanthus plant.

#### 3.4.6 Trefoil Leaf





Total 8: on 1 doorjamb base, 2 different lintels, 2 different column drums and 3 different doorjamb capitals

The trefoil leaf is carved in a variety of styles, but always appears in bas or high relief. Its design ranges from a small leaf made of three short lobes, to a shape that resembles a lily blossom. The trefoil leaves are always part of a composition that includes other types of motifs and it does not appear as the dominant element in the design.

# 3.4.7 Vine scrolls and Grape Clusters



Total 8: on 1 doorjamb base, 2 different lintels, 2 different column drums and 3 different doorjamb capitals

The "vine scrolls and grape clusters" motif is carved most commonly in bas relief on a relatively large variety of architectural element types. The motif is composed of

a vine scroll that is carved or engraved as a wavy band or as a band that meanders between medallions (in particular on lintels). The vine scroll is either engraved as a flat band or carved as a single or double bas relief band. Along the length of the vine scroll there are engraved or carved grape clusters and depictions of leafs. The leaves resemble vine leaves, or trefoil leaves and at times, are only depicted in a schematic fashion.

# 3.5 Faunal Motifs

Total 15: on 5 different lintels, 1 column drum bracket, 2 different doorjamb capitals and 2 different decorated elements of undefined architectural context There are six types of animals: 5 birds, 1 ibex or goat, 2 oxen or bulls, 2 leopards, 2 lions, 3 fish

The entire "menagerie" of animals that have been documented in this study is presented here. Animal depictions are relatively rare and there are hardly two that are alike. Similarly, carved animals always appear on the same architectural element. Birds are depicted most frequently, then fish and lastly the four legged animals. These motifs, like the floral motifs, tend to appear on the types of architectural elements that are placed on the higher levels of the structure. It is interesting to note that most of the depictions of animals originate from the site of Oboda.

#### 3.5.1 Doves, Pigeons or Quails



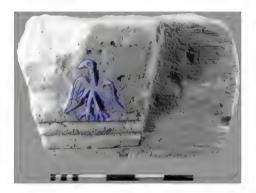
#### Total 5: on 1 lintel and 2 different doorjamb capitals

In our assemblage there are three different depictions of birds. The most minimalistic are three birds depicted on the same lintel from the North Church at Shivta (SH.N.2.LT.41, pl. 47). These birds are carved in bas relief and are illustrated in profile, facing the center of the lintel. A few engraved lines that mark the tail-

<sup>18</sup> The original composition probably included two birds at either side of the front face of the lintel, but the lintel is broken and therefore only three birds are visible.

feathers are visible on the bird nearest the right edge of the lintel. It is unclear if these birds are doves, pigeons, or quails.

#### 3.5.2 Eagle with Outstretched Wings



An eagle with outstretched wings is carved in bas relief on a doorjamb capital from Oboda (OD.E.5.CP.53, pl. 152). This capital was discovered in the debris of the basilica of the South Church in Negev's excavations of the site.<sup>19</sup> The eagle is depicted schematically, its head is in profile with a dominant eye in its center, two large outstretched wings spring from below the neck of the bird, directly followed by two long legs that terminate with large talons.

# 3.5.3 Unidentifiable Bird

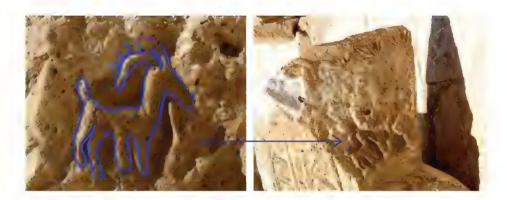


A doorjamb capital (NS.CP.48, pl. 260) from Nessana is ornamented with a bas relief of a bird depicted. The bird is in frontal view with outstretched wings and its overall

<sup>19</sup> Negev (1997), 146, photo 231.

depiction is quite fancy-form. In the center of the bird's head there appears to be a single eye. The body of the bird is divided into sections that are hollowed-out. Perhaps this is a very stylized eagle with outstretched wings.

#### 3.5.4 Ibexes or Goats



#### Total 1: on 1 column bracket

A four legged horned animal, an ibex or possibly a goat, is carved in bas relief on a column drum bracket from the North Church at Oboda (OD.D.2.CL.4, pl. 143). The animal is depicted in profile with two backwards curving horns and a short raised tail. It is standing next to a small tree or a large bush and appears to be feeding.

#### 3.5.5 Oxen or Bulls





#### Total 2: on 1 lintel

A lintel from the Roman Quarter at Oboda (OD.LT.19, pls. 139a and 139b) that is now broken in three pieces bears a depiction in bas relief of two oxen or

bulls.<sup>20</sup> The two animals appear at either end of the lintel, facing towards the center of the element and flanking a central composition. The preservation state of the lintel is partial. The heads of the oxen or bulls are barely discernible, but the overall effect of the design is quite minimalistic and simple. The two animals are carved in bas relief as if they are walking towards the center of the lintel, on their backs there are two rows of rectangular depressions while the rest of their bodies are left solid.

# 3.5.6 Leopards





#### Total 2: on 1 lintel

Two four legged animals flanking an amphora are depicted on a lintel currently located over the south entrance to the South Church at Oboda (OD.H.1.LT.31, pl. 140).<sup>21</sup> The animals appear to be roaring felines, possibly leopards, as drilled holes cover their body in what may be a representation of spots. The leopards are depicted schematically, in profile and in mid-relief, with two slightly raised front legs, gapping mouths and extended tongues. There are clear remains of red paint on and around the leopards.

<sup>20</sup> Negev (1997), 179-180, photos 292-293.

<sup>21</sup> Negev (1997), 46, photo 49.

#### 3.5.7 Lions



#### Total 3: on 2 different lintels

Two lions are depicted in profile on two different lintels from Oboda.

The first is part of a broken lintel (OD.LT.18, pl. 138) that was discovered in the Roman Quarter.<sup>22</sup> The remaining part of the composition shows a lion leaning with its front legs on an ornate amphora in the center of the composition. The lion is carved in bas relief, its mouth is open, an oval depression represents the animal's eye and downward curving grooves emphasize its mane.



The second lion appears on a lintel fragment that was discovered in a room west of the basilica of the South Church at Oboda (OD.E.LT.12, pl. 137).<sup>23</sup> This is another

<sup>22</sup> Negev (1997), 180, photo 294. In Negev's final report there is a photograph of the lintel appearing in a better preservation state than it currently has. The lion that is flanking the amphora on the right is also visible. Currently the left fragment of this lintel is on display in the visitor's center at Oboda and that is where it was reexamined for the purpose of this study.

<sup>23</sup> Negev (1997) 148, photo 239. This lintel is currently located in storage at the Israel Antiquities Authority.

depiction of a "roaring lion", but here the bas relief animal is even more schematic in its appearance; as if carved by a novice or a layman. The eye of the lion is a small round depression and the tail is raised and curving. Although both lion carvings are somewhat simplistic the overall style of their design is quite different.

#### 3.5.8 Fish

#### Total 3: on 2 different elements from undefinable architectural context

Three fish from two different sites are part of the present assemblage; all are carved in bas relief and are depicted in profile. They appear on two different decorated elements of undefined architectural context.



The first architectural element was discovered at the site of Mampsis in the debris of the stable in Building XII (MP.UC.11, pl. 233).<sup>24</sup> This decorated stone bears a depiction of a fish with a large body and a small tail. The eye of the fish is represented by a small round depression and engraved lines define its gills and fin. The overall motif is quite minimalistic in its design.

<sup>24</sup> Negev (1988), vol. 2, 86, photo. 80.





The second decorated architectural element was discovered in the debris of the vestibule of the En-Nusra burial cave (OD.UC.16, pl. 184).<sup>25</sup> Although, this burial cave is dated by its excavators to the Roman period, the style of the composition and the quality of the carving closely resembles other decorated architectural elements that are clearly dated to the Byzantine period. On a stylistic basis it is proposed that this element may belong either to an intermediate period between the Roman and Byzantine periods or to the Byzantine period.

The decorational composition of this element consists of a high relief "six-petaled rosette" flanked by a fish on either side. There are remnants of red paint on various parts of the rosette and the fish. The fish to the left of the rosette is only partially preserved. The fish to the right is much smaller than the rosette and is carved in bas relief. It has a triangular tail and a pelvic and a dorsal fin that are all further emphasized by engraved straight lines that provide the fish with a more naturalistic appearance. The gills are also marked by a curved engraving near the head of the fish.

#### 3.6 Architectural Motifs

# Total 14: on 8 different lintels, 1 column bracket and 2 different doorjamb capitals

The relatively small variety of architectural motifs that ornament several lintels, doorjamb capitals and a column bracket can be classified into three categories: "columns", "niches" and "arcades". These motifs are presented from the most common to the least common types; this is also the order of their complexity.

<sup>25</sup> Negev (1997), 87, photo 129.

#### 3.6.1 Columns

# Total 8: on 6 different lintels

Columns, as an architectural motif, are only depicted as parts of compositions that ornament lintels and can be classified into two types: "plain columns" and "spiral columns". It seems that columns only appear individually when the lintel is fragmentary. Columns are essentially carved in pairs and either border the design on either side of it or appear near its outer edges, they are not depicted as a central motif.

#### 3.6.1.1 Plain Columns



Total 2: on 2 different lintels

"Plain columns" are three times less common than the "spiral column" type. They are carved in high relief with a semi-cylindrical shaft that is not covered with any further decorations. The capital and base of the column are depicted as rectangular in shape and protrude slightly further out than the face of the column shaft.

# 3.6.1.2 Spiral Columns



Total 6: on 4 different lintels

Columns of the "spiral column" type are more commonly depicted. They are similar in their overall shape to the "plain column" type. The shafts of these columns are

covered with incised diagonal lines, alluding to spiral columns that can be seen in churches supporting the ciborium.

# 3.6.2 Niches

Elusa - EL.CP.26



Shivta - SH.P.LT.38



Unknown Site - NT.LT.22



Total 4: on 2 different lintels and 1 doorjamb capital

The niche as a decorational motif is not very common; it appears carved in relief, on two different lintels and one doorjamb capital. In three instances the niche is depicted as a semi-dome and once as conch-shaped. In all cases the niche is supported by two columns. The columns are both of the "plain column" and the "spiral column" type. The niche that decorates a doorjamb capital from Elusa is vacant (EL.CP.26, pl. 300). The two niches that appear on the lintel from Shivta may have been inhabited (SH.P. LT.38, pl. 52), but the current state of preservation of this lintel is such that if there was further decoration it is no longer discernible. Interestingly, the single conch-niche that is carved in the center of a lintel from an unknown site seems to have been inhabited by a "Greek cross" with flared arms. This cross is barely visible and is badly damaged; this damage may have been intentional.

#### 3.6.3 Arcades





Shivta - SH.CP.51



## Total 2: on 1 column bracket and 1 doorjamb capital

Two different depictions of arcades appear on a column bracket from Oboda (OD.D.2. CL.8, pls. 144a and 144b) and a doorjamb capital from Shivta (SH.CP.51, pl. 71). The first is a minimalistic composition that appears continuously on three sides of the column bracket. The arcade is carved in sunken relief. The arcade on the second element is more complex in design. It is engraved on the front trapezoidal facet of a doorjamb capital. The composition is of a niche flanked by one complete and one half-niche on either side. The "half-dome" of the center niche is filled with an engraving of a net pattern. The niches on either side of the center one have a cross inscribed in their "half-domes". The outer half-niches are void. The three central niches have engravings that may depict hanging curtains.<sup>26</sup>

# 3.7 Object-Type Motif





# Total 9: on 5 different doorjamb bases, 2 different lintels and 2 different doorjamb capitals

The only object that is repeatedly depicted on various architectural elements is the amphora and in all instances it is carved in bas relief. The depictions range from an amphora that is only defined by its contour lines and is inhabited with additional decorations, to more ornate amphorae, with bodies that are ornamented with a variety of geometric motifs. None of the amphorae in the assemblage appear as a solitary decoration; they are either flanked by rosettes or are part of a larger and usually more complex composition.

# 3.8 Figurative

# Total 1: Human Figure on a Lintel

There are a few published examples of depictions of the human figure (mostly faces), and due the rarity of this type of ornamentation, only one example was thoroughly documented for the purpose of this study.<sup>27</sup> This decoration appears on a lintel that was discovered in the debris of a storeroom in Building XII at Mampsis (MP.LT.15, pl. 202).<sup>28</sup> In what may have been the center of this fragmented lintel, there is a carving of a high relief niche containing a carved, high relief head of a human figure. The eyebrows, nose and lips are carved in relief, while the eyes are engraved. The ears are carved in bas relief on either side of the drop-shaped head, with a few engraved lines marking their inner contours. The area below the head is

<sup>27</sup> This category specifically refers to depictions of the human figure as opposed to faunal motifs.

<sup>28</sup> Negev (1988), vol. 2, 86-87, photo 81.



damaged, but the beginning of a cylindrical neck is visible. It is not clear if the rectangular engraving below the head is meant to represent part of the body of the figure. Negev interprets this motif to be a

"deity within arcuated shrine of two columns, with square symbolizing altar below deity".<sup>29</sup>

The relative scarcity of depictions of the human figure may be connected to a variety of causes, all of which should be regarded with caution. One suggestion may be that similarly to other motifs in the assemblage, the more complex the motif the rarer its appearance. Another reason might have to do with possible iconoclasm that such decorations may have incurred at different occasions after the Byzantine period. Or, that such decorations were more prone to robbery during modern times. The reason for the infrequency of this type of figurative decoration is probably not a single one and may also be a combination of all of the above mentioned causes.

# 3.9 Distribution of Motifs

The distribution of the motifs can be examined both, through a comparative analysis of the entire assemblage of architectural elements, and also more particularly, through a comparative analysis within each of the different categories of motifs. The categories,

<sup>29</sup> Negev (1988), vol. 2, 86-87.

as they have been presented in the previous pages, are: geometric motifs, rosettes, floral motifs, faunal motifs, architectural motifs, objects and the human figure.

In order to conduct both, the general and the more particular comparative studies, the frequency of appearance of each type of motif has been meticulously counted in two ways. First, the number of individual times that a motif appears on any type of architectural element has been noted and summed up. Second, if the same motif appeared more than once on a particular element it was also noted separately, as a single occurrence. For example, in the above described category of "geometric motifs", motif number 18, the "solar disk" is used for ornamentation a total of 6 times, but as it appears twice on the same lintel and twice on the same doorjamb capital, it is also counted as appearing on "3 different lintels and 1 doorjamb capital". The first set of numbers (the totals) allows a comparison between the actual number of times that the different types of motifs appear both within in the entire assemblage and their motif-type categories. Some motifs have been carved in a more repetitive fashion then others. Therefore, noting their repetitive appearance on the same architectural element as a single occurrence, allows for a more leveled comparison of the distribution of the different motif types on different types of architectural elements.<sup>30</sup> The combining of different motifs to form compositions and the choice for the location of these compositions, both in a particular type of structure (public versus private) and within it, will be thoroughly elaborated upon in the next chapter.

The data in the following tables and charts will represents the frequency of the appearance of motifs, both within the entire assemblage and within their own typological categories.

## 3.9.1 A Comparison of the Distribution of Motifs within the Entire Assemblage

Table 3 shows a comparison of the frequencies of the motifs within the entire assemblage. The quantities represent the number of times that different types of motifs appear on various types of architectural elements.<sup>31</sup> Upon examination of the totals of each of the motif categories in Table 3 it is clear that geometric motifs appear by far more frequently than any other type of motif, and that the motif of the human figure is the least common. The dispersion of the frequency of appearances of the motifs is illustrated in the following chart.

<sup>30</sup> Motifs that appear in bands or groups have been counted individually. For example, a band of "dentils" was noted as one and not according to the number of individual "dentils" that compose it.

<sup>31</sup> In a motif appears twice on the same architectural element it is only counted once, in order to diminish the dissonance between the actual number of architectural elements in the assemblage and the number of motifs. Further on in this analysis the actual number of motifs, regardless is they appear twice on the same element, will be presented and discussed.

Table 3: The Frequencies of the Motifs within the Entire Assembla
---

	Geometric	Rosettes	Floral	Faunal	Architectural	Object	Figure
Bases	135	0	5	0	0	5	0
Doorjambs	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lintels	86	32	4	5	8	2	1
Columns	27	0	4	1	1	0	0
Capitals	274	1	44	2	2	2	0
Cornices	102	1	0	0	0	0	0
Arches	55	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Context	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
TOTAL	692	34	57	10	11	9	1

Chart 1 illustrates that floral motifs are the second most common and that, interestingly, this category is relatively closely followed by the rosettes category, as a choice for ornamentation. On the one hand, it is not entirely surprising that rosettes are the third commonest motif, as they are in a sense, a hybrid of geometric and

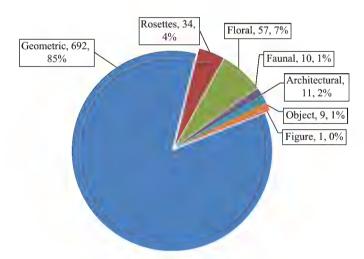


Chart 1: A Comparison of the Frequency of Motifs within the Entire Assemblage (N=814)31.

**<sup>32</sup>** The reason that the total number of individuals (N) in this pie chart is greater than the number of architectural elements within the assemblage is that most decorated elements bear more than one type of motif and are therefore "registered" in the overall count more than once.

floral motifs. On the other hand, it is important to note that the variety of types of rosettes, and possibly also their range of symbolic meaning is smaller than that of the floral motifs. This might be an indication of the importance of the rosette as an ornament in the Byzantine Negev.

Table 3 also shows the dispersion of the motifs, not just within their stylistic categories, but also according to the types of architectural elements that they ornament. This dispersion is further illustrated on Chart 2.

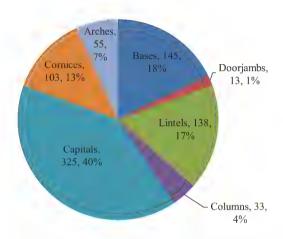


Chart 2: A Comparison of the Frequency of the Motifs on the Architectural Elements in the Entire Assemblage (N=812).

Chart 2 demonstrates the number of times that motifs from all categories appear on the different types of architectural elements. Therefore, the numeric totals that appear next to each category label are not indicative of the number of elements of this type that are in the assemblage, but the number of times that motifs appear on them. For example, the total number of capitals in the assemblage may be 107, but the number of motifs appearing on them is actually 325, or 40% of the counted motifs. This is the most in all element categories. Naturally, the ratio between the quantity of architectural elements and the quantity of motifs appearing on them is highest in the lintels category (43 lintels to 138 motifs that appear on them, with a ratio of 3.21), but this is probably a result of the greater surface area available on lintels for decoration. This type of comparison only takes into account the frequencies of motifs in general terms, but not the complexity of design of the individual motifs. For example, most of the geometric motifs tend to be less complex in design than motifs belonging to the "floral" and "faunal" categories. In the following sub-chapter these types of comparisons are further elaborate upon.

## 3.9.2 A Comparison of the Distribution of Motifs within each Category

The following tables and charts present a comparison of different types of motifs within their own categories. In each stylistic category of motifs, the quantities compared represent the actual number of times that each kind of motif appears in the assemblage, regardless if the motif appears twice on the same architectural element. The different categories are discussed from the least complex groups of motifs to the most elaborate; starting with geometric motifs and ending with object-type motifs. The only category not discussed in this sub-chapter is the figurative category, as there is only one example that was included in the assemblage and therefore is unsuitable for this type of comparative analysis.

#### 3.9.3 Geometric Motifs

Geometric motifs comprise the majority of ornaments that are both engraved and carved on all types of elements in the assemblage. The number of times that each of the geometric motifs appears on each type of architectural element is presented in Table 3. The table includes both the dispersion of the 1286 geometric motifs among the different types of architectural elements, and the frequency of their appearance, in percentages, within the group of geometric motifs.

This table shows that the three most common motifs are the fillet molding, the upright band and the sunken fillet. These are the least elaborate of all the motifs in the category. All three are essentially variations on a flat and smooth band that is either carved in high, bas and sunken relief, or no relief at all. On the whole, the data in Table 3. shows that the motifs that appear less frequently are also the most complex. The exceptions are the medallions, which are seemingly quite a frequently chosen ornament, appearing 83 time in the assemblage; but it must be noted that in actuality the category of medallions includes nine different types of medallions ranging from a medallion engraved as a thin compass-made circle to more ornate medallions that are composed of a "rope pattern" or "bead-and-reel" band. In addition, *scotia* moldings and the "vertical triangular band" motifs are less frequent simply because they are carved on element-types that are less common in the assemblage, column bases and doorjambs.

Table 4 includes the frequencies of geometric motifs on the various types of architectural elements; this data is also displayed in Chart 3 on the following page. Chart 3 can be compared to Chart 4, which presents the quantities of the different types of architectural elements within the entire assemblage. Interestingly, aside from slight variations these two charts are quite similar in their appearance, despite the fact that the total number of individuals that are represented in each chart is very different (1286 vs. 316). This similarity is a clear indication of how wide spread

Table 4: Frequency of Geometric Motifs.

Motif	Total	Percent	Bases	Doorjambs	Lintels	Columns	Capitals	Cornices	Arches
1. Lathe-Made Engravings	30	2.3%	15	ı	1	80	7	I	
2. Upright Band	233	17.9%	39	ı	1	I	93	101	1
3. Fillet	280	21.5%	99	l	ı	37	132	30	25
4. Sunken Fillet	160	12.3%	30	ı	ı	7	24	96	m
5. Slightly Concave Band	13	1.0%	1	8	1	1	7	1	3
6. Slightly Convex Band	114	8.8%	38	1	1	2	62	9	9
7. Vertical Slightly Convex Band	25	1.9%	4	80	ı	1	12	I	П
8. Vertical Triangular Band	4	0.3%	1	4	ı	ı	l	I	1
9. Scotia Molding	ĸ	0.4%	5	ı	ı	ı	I	I	1
10. Torus Molding	23	1.8%	23	ı	ı	ı	ı	ı	1
11. Ovolo Molding	00	%9.0	1	1	1	1	1	E	2
12. Rope-Pattern Band	40	3.1%	6	ı	2	e	18	25	е.
13. Dentils	41	3.1%	00	I	1	5	19	2	9

14. Zigzag Pattern	102	7.8%	14	I	ı	ı	62	18	∞
15. Fishbone Pattern	20	1.5%	ı	I	П	ı	16	2	1
16. Star-like Shapes in Frames	51	3.9%	12	4	8	I	27	2	ω
17. Square and Rhombus Frame	9	0.5%	1	I	9	ı	1	Î	1
18. Solar Disk	9	0.5%	ı	1	4	ı	2	1	1
19. Band of Ovals	9	0.5%	ı	ι	1	ı	2	ι	1
20. Bead-and-Reel Band	12	%6.0	1	1		ı	&	8	1
21. Crosses	40	3.1%	1	ı	24	3	12	ı	1
22. Medallions	83	6.4%	ı	I	82	I	4	ı	l
Total	1286	100.0%	255	19	123	65	207	268	65

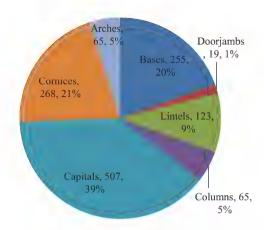


Chart 3: Frequency of Geometric Motifs According to Architectural Element Types (N=1286).

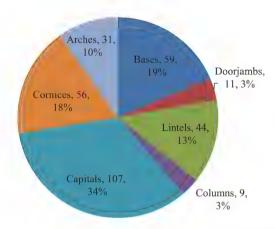


Chart 4: Types of Architectural Elements in the Entire Assemblage (N=317).

the use of geometric motifs was in the design of the compositions that adorn the architectural elements of the Negev.

## 3.9.4 Rosettes

Rosettes are placed in a category of their own due their combined geometric and floral nature. As previously mentioned these ornaments are the most common after the floral motifs category, and they are divided typologically into four different groups. Table 5 shows that the most common type of rosette is the "wheel-spoke rosette" closely followed by the compass-made "six-petaled rosette". By far the two least common types of rosettes are the "whirling-wheel rosette" and the "four-petaled rosette".

Table 5: Frequency of Rosettes.

Motif	Total	Percentage	Bases	Doorjambs	Lintels	Columns	Capitals	Cornices	Arches
23. Wheel- Spoke Rosette	20	44.4%	-	-	12	-	1	1	
24. Whirling- Wheel Rosette	5	11.1%	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
25. Six- Petaled Rosette	17	37.8%	-	-	14	_	_	_	-
26. Four- Petaled Rosette	3	6.7%	-	-	3	_	-	-	_
Total	45	100%	-	-	32	-	1	1	_

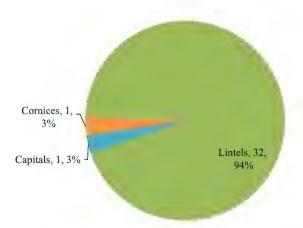


Chart 5: Frequency of Rosettes According to Architectural Element Types (N=45).

The dispersion of the 45 rosettes that adorn the various architectural elements is not as evenly spread as that of the previously described group of motifs. This is clearly evident through a comparison between Charts 5 and 6. Chart 5 shows the frequency of rosettes according to the types of architectural elements they appear on. Chart 6 illustrates the frequency of architectural elements in the entire assemblage. Chart 5 also demonstrates a strong tendency to place rosettes on lintels over any other type of architectural element.

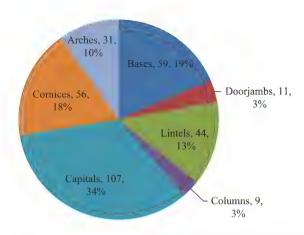


Chart 6: Types of Architectural Elements in the Entire Assemblage (N=317).

### 3.9.5 Floral Motifs

Although floral motifs are the second most common group of motifs, this category is relatively unvaried and consists of three main types of ornaments: palmettes, trefoils leaves and – vine scrolls and grape clusters. The various versions of the palmette constitute the main part of the floral motifs group, 88% of it, as can be seen in Table 6. The two other types of motifs evenly make up the rest of the category. Floral motifs are by far less common than any of the geometric motifs, and as opposed to them, do not appear on all types of architectural elements. This can be observed by comparing Charts 7 and 8. Floral motifs appear predominantly on doorjamb capitals (77%) and to a much lesser extent on doorjamb bases, lintels and columns.

Table 6: Frequency of Floral Motifs.

Motif	Total	Percentage	Bases	Doorjambs	Lintels	Columns	Capitals	Cornices	Arches
27. Palmettes	117	88%	3	_	-	-	38	-	_
28. Trefoil Leaf	8	6%	1	-	2	2	3	-	-
29. Vine scrolls and Grape Clusters	8	6%	1	-	2	2	3	_	_
Total	133	100%	5	-	4	4	44	-	_

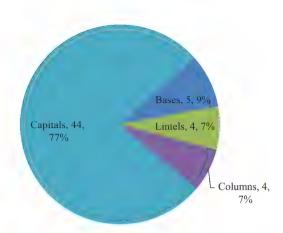


Chart 7: Frequency of Floral Motifs According to Architectural Element Types (N=133).

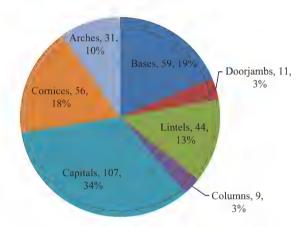


Chart 8: Types of Architectural Elements in the Entire Assemblage (N=317).

### 3.9.6 Faunal Motifs

The entire range of faunal motifs was illustrated in the above catalogue. This group includes a variety of 15 depictions of animals of which birds are the predominant type as can be seen in Table 7. Most frequently the depiction of the animals is schematic and at times even fanciful. Charts 9 and 10, show a comparison of the distribution of the faunal ornaments in relation to the quantities of the different types of architectural elements in the entire assemblage. Chart 9, in particular, demonstrates that half of the faunal motifs are carved on lintels, two are carved on doorjamb capitals, two are carved on elements from an undefined architectural context and one is carved on a column drum.

Table 7: Frequency of Faunal Motifs.

Motif	Total	Percentage	Bases	Doorjambs	Lintels	Columns	Capitals	Cornices	Arches	Total Percentage Bases Doorjambs Lintels Columns Capitals Cornices Arches Undefined Context
30. Birds	5	33.3%	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
31. Ibexes or Goats	7	%2'9	ı	ı	ı	1	1	1	ı	ı
32. Oxen or Bulls	1	%2'9	I	ı	-	I	ı	1	ı	I
33. Leopards	2	13.3%	I	ı	7	I	I	1	ı	I
34. Lions	m	20%	ı	ı	2	I	I	ı	ı	ı
35. Fish	٣	20%	I	ı	I	I	I	1	I	2
Total	15	100%	I	1	5	₩.	2	1	ı	2

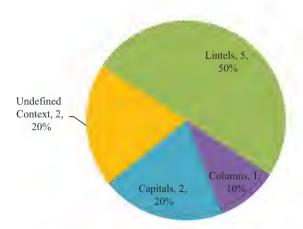


Chart 9: Frequency of Faunal Motifs According to Architectural Element Types (N=10).

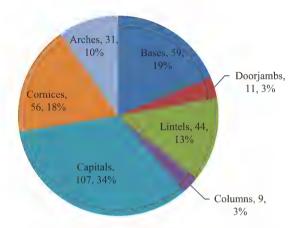


Chart 10: Types of Architectural Elements in the Entire Assemblage (N=317).

### 3.9.7 Architectural Motifs

Architectural motifs are nearly as frequent as faunal motifs and include depictions of columns, niches and arcades. Table 8 shows that slightly over half of these types of motifs are columns. However, this greater frequency is simply a reflection of the depiction of columns in pairs. Charts 11 and 12, are a comparison of the distribution of the architectural motifs to the general quantities of the different types of architectural elements in the entire assemblage. Chart 11 bears some similarities to the previously described charts 5 and 9, regarding the rosettes and faunal motifs, in the sense that architectural motifs also tend to appear on lintels and in lesser quantities on doorjamb capitals and column brackets.

Table 8: Frequency of Architectural Motifs.

Motif	Total	Percentage	Bases	Doorjambs	Lintels	Columns	Capitals	Cornices	Arches
36. Columns	8	57.1%	-	-	6	-	-	-	_
37. Niches	4	28.6%	_	-	2	-	1	-	_
38. Arcades	2	14.3%	-	-	-	1	1	-	_
Total	14	100%	-	-	8	1	2	_	-

Lintels, 8, 73% Columns, Capitals, 2, 18%

Chart 11: Frequency of Architectural Motifs According to Architectural Element Types (N=11).

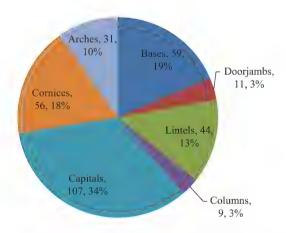


Chart 12: Types of Architectural Elements in the Entire Assemblage (N=317).

## 3.9.8 Object Type Motif

As opposed to the other groups of motifs, the present category only includes one type of ornament – the amphora, as can be seen in Table 9. Charts 13 and 14, are a comparison of the distribution of this motif on different types of architectural elements to the general quantities of the different types of elements in the entire assemblage. As opposed to the rosettes, faunal and architectural motifs, the amphora appears most frequently on doorjamb bases and less frequently on lintels. Amphorae are also carved on two doorjamb capitals.

Table 9: Frequency of the Object-Type Motif.

Motif	Total	Percentage	Bases	Doorjambs	Lintels	Columns	Capitals	Cornices	Arches
39. Amphorae	9	100%	5	-	2	-	2	-	-
Total	9	100%	5	_	2	-	2	-	_

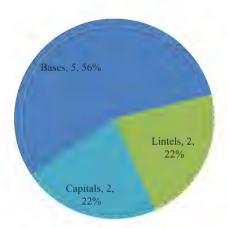


Chart 13: Frequency of the Object-Type Motif According to Architectural Element Types (N=9).

# 3.10 A Comparative Study of the "ZIGZAG PATTERN"

The study of stone architectural decorations in the Byzantine Negev included meticulous documentation of the individual ornaments. This meant that not only general measurements such as heights, lengths and widths were taken, but also specific measurements of all components of the design of the motifs. The reasoning behind this type of scrupulous documentation is threefold. First, the work was carried out with the understanding that it is difficult to know what data could bear importance before the analysis of the material starts. Second, although this study is comprehensive, like all other academic work, it is conducted under certain bureaucratic time constraints.

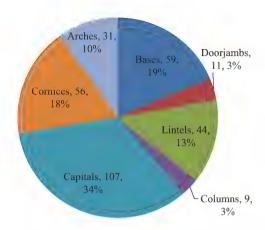


Chart 14: Types of Architectural Elements in the Entire Assemblage (N=317).

Therefore, it stood to reason that even if only a sample of the data were to be used, the information that is gained could perhaps be further analyzed in future studies. Third, careful documentation is imperative when dealing with artifacts that are in danger of perishing, not only for the sake of recording, but also for application to future conservation purposes. An example of the type of comparative analysis that is made possible through the measurements that were taken in the field is demonstrated in this subchapter.

The "zigzag pattern" is a decorative band that is both engraved, and more commonly, carved in relief, on doorjamb bases, doorjamb capitals, cornices and arch stones. This motif is composed of a row of triangles that are either upside-down in relief or right-side-up in relief. The measurements that were taken are: the height of the band, its length, the average height of the individual triangles that make up the pattern and the average widths of their bases. The first four tables that follow (Tables 10, 11, 12 and 13) present the elements that are decorated with a "zigzag pattern". The information included relates to the location of the architectural element, the full measurements of the "zigzag pattern", the number of "triangles" that compose the pattern and whether they are upside-down or right-side-up. Due to the varying states of preservation of the elements, some of the measurements had to be approximated and in these cases the approximation is noted. In other cases, when even an approximate measurement was not possible, the table cell was left blank. The tables are divided according to the different types of architectural elements. Table 14 provides a comparative summary of the first four tables.

<sup>33</sup> Also known as the "radiant frieze", in its later, more elaborate and three-dimensional version.

**<sup>34</sup>** This refers to the triangles that were carved in relief and not to the negative of the pattern which is more depressed.

Abbreviation of Site Names	Legend
SH = Shivta	- All measurements are in centimeters
NS = Nessana	<ul> <li>~ = approximation, - = Could not be measured</li> </ul>
EL = Elusa	- In the category "Number of Triangles" 1/2 means half a triangle
MP = Mampsis	on one end; $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{2}$ means that there is a half triangle both on
	the left and the right ends of the band.
OD = Oboda	<ul> <li>Up – the band is composed of upright triangles</li> </ul>
NT = Unknown Site	<ul> <li>Down – the band is composed of upside-down triangles</li> </ul>

Table 10 – There are seven doorjamb bases, four from Shivta and three from Oboda that are decorated with a relief "zigzag pattern". All of these bases are located *in situ*; two of the bases from Shivta are located in a Church and the other two in a domestic structure. All the bases from Oboda are located in a domestic structure. Some of the doorjamb bases are decorated on both their front and their depth sides, most commonly with a continuous composition. Since the decoration is continuous, for the purposes of this study only the measurements of the front sides of the doorjamb bases were compared. The heights of the bands that form the pattern are

Table 10: The "Zigzag Pattern" on Doorjamb Bases.

Number	Inventory Number of Elements	Location	Height of Band (cm)	Length of Band (cm)	Height of Triangle (cm)	Width of Triangle at Base (cm)		Direction
1	SH.C.1. BP.15	in situ	2.2	26.6	2.2	~3	1/2 7 1/2	Up
2	SH.C.1. BP.16	in situ	2.4	25.5	2.4	2–3	1/2 8 1/2	Up
3	SH.I.1. BP.39	in situ	5	~21	5	2.5-3.5	7 ½	Up
4	SH.I.2. BP.41	in situ	2.8	21.9	2.8	1.6	11 to 12	Up
5	OD.C.2. BP.10	in situ	4	23.3	3.5	4	5 ½	Up
6	OD.C.2. BP.11	in situ	4	24.3	4	3-4	5 ½	Up
7	OD.C.2. BP.12	in situ	5	23.7	5	~4	5 ½	Up
	AVERAGE		3.63	23.76	3.56	3.09	7 1/2	

between 2.2cm and 5cm - 3.63cm on average; the widths are between approximately 21cm and 26.6cm - 23.76cm on average. The heights of the triangles that form the band are between 2.2cm and 5cm - 3.56cm on average; the widths of their bases are between 1.6cm and 4cm - 3.09cm on average. The average number of triangles that compose the "zigzag pattern" on the doorjamb bases is seven and a half and in all cases the triangles are carved right-side-up in bas relief. From the relatively wide range of widths and heights of both the bands and the triangles that form the design it appears that a set pattern did not exist and it could be suggested that the outlines of the triangles were carved individually and perhaps with a freehand, this would account for their varying sizes not only between the different architectural elements, but also within the individual "zigzag pattern" bands.

Table 11 – There are 24 architectural elements classified as doorjamb capitals that are ornamented with a "zigzag pattern". The overall shape of doorjamb capitals and doorjamb bases is the same and therefore elements that were documented outside of their original location were classified by default as doorjamb capitals. The reasoning behind this form of classification is that doorjamb capitals, being located on a higher level within a given structure than doorjamb bases, are more likely to be dislocated by collapse. This may be an explanation for the discrepancy between the quantity of doorjamb bases and capitals that bear the "zigzag pattern" motif. In Table 11, under the heading of *location*, doorjamb capitals that are *in situ* are noted; capitals that are not located in situ, but that have elements in their decorative composition that indicate firmly by their directionality that they are capitals are noted as certain capital; capitals that are not in situ, but are classified as capitals are marked as, not in situ. In the present group there are six capitals from Shivta, six capitals from Nessana, two from Mampsis, one from Oboda and nine that originate from unknown sites in the Negev. Of the capitals whose provenance is known there are five that originate from churches and one that is located in situ in a domestic structure.

Frequently the doorjamb capitals are decorated with a continuous composition on their front and one of their depth sides. For the purposes of this comparative analysis only the measurements of the front sides were used. According to the above table the overall heights of the "zigzag pattern" bands range from 1.8cm to 5cm - 3.4cm on average; the lengths range from 17.7cm to approximately 28.5cm -19.66cm on average. The heights of the triangles that compose the pattern range between 1.8cm to 5cm – 3.29cm on average; the widths of the bases of the triangles range from 1.5cm to 4.5cm - 2.83cm on average. In an average band there are six and a half triangles that make up the pattern. Similarly, to doorjamb bases, the inconsistency in the measurements of the components of the pattern on doorjamb capitals, suggests that no pattern was used. Interestingly, as opposed to doorjamb bases, the triangles on doorjamb capitals are upside-down in relief and not rightside-up.

Table 11: The "Zigzag Pattern" on Doorjamb Capitals.

Number	Inventory Number of Elements	Location	Height of Band (cm)	Length of Band (cm)	Height of Triangle (cm)	Width of Triangle at Base (cm)	of	Direction
1	SH.CP.31	Not in situ	3	17.7	3	1.5	10	Down
2	SH.H.1. CP.42	in situ	2	23	1.9	2	1/2 9 1/2	Down
3	SH.P.CP.99	in situ	3.5	21.7	3.5	3-4	5 ½	Down
4	SH.P. CP.100	in situ	2.8	21.7	2.8	~3.4	5 ½	Down
5	SH.N.2. CP.106	in situ ?	4.6	27.6	4.6	1.2-2.1	1/2 10 1/2	Down
6	SH.N.2. CP.107	in situ ?	2.6	27.9	2.6	1.5-2.4	1/2 11 1/2	Down
7	NS.CP.48	Certain capital	2.8	24.3	2.8	2.5	6	Down
8	NS.CP.59	Not in situ	~3.5	23.6	~3.5	3.5	4	Down
9	NS.CP.66	Certain capital	3.2	23.1	3.2	2.5	7 1/2	Down
10	NS.CP.69	Not in situ	4	-	4	4.3	1/2 4 1/2	Down
11	NS.CP.71	Certain capital	3.2	23.1	3.2	2.1-2.5	9	Down
12	NS.CP.87	Not in situ	3.9	22.6	3.9	3-4.5	5 ½	Down
13	MP.CP.81	Certain capital	2.85	23.5	2.85	2.3-3	8	Down
14	MP.A.6. CP.110	in situ	2.8	20	~2.8	~3	5 1/2	Down
15	OD.CP.29	Not in situ	3.5	25.5	2.5	3	-	Down
16	NT.CP.5	Not in situ	~3	-	3	~2	9	Down

Table 11 (continued)

Number	Inventory Number of Elements	Location	Height of Band (cm)	Length of Band (cm)	Height of Triangle (cm)	Width of Triangle at Base (cm)		Direction
17	NT.CP.17	Not in situ	4-5	-	4-5	2.5	-	Down
18	NT.CP.23	Certain capital	4.7	~28.5	3.3	3	7-8	Down
19	NT.CP.24	Certain capital	4	~22	4	3.5	1/2 4 1/2	Down
20	NT.CP.25	Certain capital	4	~26.3	4	3.5	7 ½	Down
21	NT.CP.28	Certain capital	4	-	4	3.5	-	Down
22	NT.CP.35	Certain capital	3	21	3	3	1/2 6 1/2	Down
23	NT.CP.54	Not in situ	1.8	~25	1.8	1.7	14	Down
24	NT.CP.113	Not in situ	4.3	23.7	4.3	3.7	-	Down
	AVERAGE		3.40	19.66	3.29	2.83	6 1/2	

Table 12 – The "zigzag pattern" ornaments 12 cornices. Interestingly, apart from one cornice, all of the cornices originate in Shivta. The single cornice that does not is currently located in collapse at Mampsis. Some of the cornices in Shivta are located in situ both in dwellings and public buildings and some are no longer in their original location. Typically, the cornices are either decorated only on the front side or on the front and both of the depth sides. In the present analysis only the measurements taken from the front sides of the cornices were compared. The heights of the bands range from 2cm to 4.5cm - 2.96cm on average; the lengths of the bands range from 39.8cm to 65.8cm - 42.28cm on average. The heights of the individual triangles that form the pattern range from 3cm to 4cm - 2.88cm on average; the widths of bases of the triangles vary from 1.3cm to 5.5cm – 2.78cm on average. An average row of "zigzag pattern" on a cornice contains approximately 13 triangles. In all instances of "zigzag patterns" on cornices the triangles are carved upside-down, in relief.

Table 13 - There are seven arch segments that are decorated with bands of "zigzag pattern". Three of these arch segments originate from Shivta and the rest from Oboda. The compositions that contain this motif, in all cases, are carved in relief on

Table 12: The "Zigzag Pattern" on Cornices.

Number	Inventory Number of Elements	Height of Band (cm)	Length of Band (cm)	Height of Triangle (cm)	Width of Triangle at Base (cm)	Number of Triangles	Direction
1	SH.A.12.CR.1	3	~62	2.5-3	2-2.5	21	Down
2	SH.CR.10	2.5	49.5	2.5	-	-	Down
3	SH.C.1.CR.32	2	39.8	2	1.3-2.1	1/2 18 1/2	Down
4	SH.E.1.CR.33	4	57.6	3.5-4	3-5	1/2 10 1/2	Down
5	SH.E.1.CR.34	4.5	59.4	4	3.5-5.5	1/2 10 1/2	Down
6	SH.C.1.CR.49	2.3	63	2.3	2.2-3	1/2 20 1/2	Down
7	SH.C.1.CR.51	~2.4	-	~2.4	3	1/2 18 1/2	Down
8	SH.M.CR.55	~2.5	-	~2.5	1.7-1.9	Preserved 13	Down
9	SH.N.1.CR.58	~3	65.8	~3	3.2-4.5	15 ½	Down
10	SH.N.1.CR.59	3.2	~59.3	3.2	3.3-4.3	14	Down
11	SH.G.CR.38	2.7	-	2.7	2.8	-	Down
12	MP.A.1.CR.60	3.4	51	3.4	2.5-3.5	14	Down
	AVERAGE	2.96	42.28	2.88	2.78	13	

Table 13: The "Zigzag Pattern" on Arch Segments.

Number	Inventory Number of Elements	Height of Band (cm)	Length of Band (cm)	Height of Triangle (cm)	Width of Triangle at Base (cm)	of	Direction
1	SH.P.1.AR.16	2	33.7	2	2-2.5	15 1/2	Down
2	SH.P.1.AR.17	2.1	26	2.1	2	11 1/2	Down
3	SH.P.1.AR.18	~1.5	36.4	~1.5	1.7-2	~20 1/2	Down
4	OD.D.3.AR.2	3	26.5	3	3.5	8	Down
5	OD.E.3.AR.6	3	27.8	3	2.5	7	Down
6	OD.D.4.AR.5	2.6	28.7	2.6	3.3	8 1/2	Down
7	OD.E.4.AR.7	3	~24.5	3	3	7	Down
	AVERAGE	2.46	29.09	2.46	2.63	11	

the front facet of the arch segment. The heights of the bands range from approximately 1.5cm to 3cm - 2.46cm on average; the length of the bands range from approximately 24.5cm to 36.4cm - 29.09cm on average. The heights of the triangles that form the pattern vary from approximately 1.5cm to 3cm - 2.46cm on average; and the widths at the bases of the triangles range from 1.7cm to 3.5cm - 2.63cm on average. The average number of triangles that form a "zigzag pattern" band on an arch segment is 11. All of the bands that are decorated with this motif are carved in bas relief as upside-down triangles.

Table 14 - Through a comparison of the average measurements recorded from each of the different types of architectural elements decorated with a relief of the "zigzag pattern", certain tendencies can be observed and some conclusions are reached. The inconsistencies in the heights and widths of both, the overall sizes of the bands and of the individual triangles that form the "zigzag pattern", indicate that the motif was most likely not drawn with the use of a set pattern and was probably engraved with a freehand before being carved. The average heights of the bands tend to range between approximately 2cm to 4cm and it seems that on doorjamb bases and capitals, where the general surface area to be decorated tends to be higher, the heights of the bands are slightly greater. Likewise, the lengths of the bands also tend to be dictated by the overall size of the element which they ornament; therefore, the lengths of the "zigzag pattern" bands on cornices are longer by at least 10cm on average than on the other types of architectural elements. Naturally, this occurrence also shares a correlation with the number of triangles that compose a "zigzag pattern" band.

Table 14: Comparison of Averages of the "Zigzag Pattern" according to Architectural Element Type.

Type of Architectural Element	Height of Band (cm)	Length of Band (cm)	Height of Triangle (cm)	Width of Triangle at Base (cm)	Number of Triangles	Direction
Doorjamb Bases	3.63	23.76	3.56	3.09	7 1/2	Up
Doorjamb Capitals	3.40	19.66	3.29	2.83	6 1/2	Down
Cornices	2.96	42.28	2.88	2.78	13	Down
Arch Segments	2.46	29.09	2.46	2.63	11	Down
AVERAGE	3.11	28.70	3.05	2.83	9 1/2	-

A special insight that can be gained by this type of an examination of relates to the direction in which the pattern is depicted. It is interesting to note that the triangles that form the pattern only appear to be in a right-side-up formation on doorjamb bases, while on doorjamb capitals, cornices and arch segments they appear to be upside-down. Fundamentally, doorjamb capitals and bases are carved on ashlars of the same shape, only inverted. Therefore, when a doorjamb capital or a base is not located *in situ* and does not bear a motif that could only be placed in one direction, it is impossible to tell if the element is either. The fact that on all of the documented, *in situ* doorjamb bases that are decorated with a "zigzag pattern", the pattern is composed of right-side-up triangles; on all other elements the triangles appear upside-down. This implies that doorjamb bases and capitals were often, originally carved without a premeditate decision to be used as either a capital or a base, and the motif was carved as an upside-down pattern and inverted when the mason chose to use the architectural element as a base rather than a capital.

To summarize, this type of analysis may provide further insight to the manner in which an ornament was carved and even to the mode of production of certain architectural elements and their usage within the structures they adorned. A study of this nature could only be carried out through the recording of precise measurements pertaining to all aspects of a given motif. This type of analysis is rather time consuming and therefore could not be carried out for all of the motifs that were presented in this chapter within the time constraints of this study. However, this data is now available and further analyses of this type can be carried out in the future.

# 3.11 Summary

There are seven defined categories of motifs: geometric, rosettes, floral, faunal, architectural, object-type and figurative. The category that is most dominant of these in frequency is the geometric motifs category. This category includes both canonical and non-canonical ornaments. Canonical ornaments are those that appeared since Hellenistic times in great frequencies and set locations, as part of the decoration of the entablature. In Greek architecture such ornaments would include a molding with a particular type of decoration that would be carved on it, as in the case of the *ovolo* molding and the "egg and dart pattern" that came to be termed after it. The non-canonical moldings are considered to be ornaments that were not part of the range of decorations carved during the Classical Greek period. <sup>35</sup> In the present repertoire of motifs canonical moldings such as the *ovolo*, *scotia* and *torus*, exist in relatively few instances, while the non-canonical motifs are the predominant ones. Many, such as the "rope pattern" motif continued to appear since the Roman period, but in general were carved in a more minimalistic and schematic fashion.

<sup>35</sup> Turnheim (1987), Vol. 1, 16-17, 25, 48.

Geometric motifs are by far the most common as they also appear in combination with motifs from the other defined categories, of which the rosettes and floral motifs are the most common.

An analysis of the distribution and frequencies of the motifs has shown that certain types of motifs, especially of the geometric type, appear on all types of elements; while others, have a tendency to appear on certain types of architectural elements. For example, rosette motifs predominantly ornament lintels. In general, it appears that the more complex motifs tend to be engraved and carved less frequently. In addition, to the examination of the rate of occurrence of the motifs and their distribution on the various architectural elements a model comparative study was conducted with the use of meticulous measurements that were taken of all the components of the "zigzag pattern". This comparative study demonstrated the type of information that may be gained through an exhaustive analysis, and the conclusions that could be reached regarding the nature of the motifs and the artifacts they adorn. In the following chapter the compositions that are formed through the combination of the motifs are discussed.

# 4 Fine-Tuning: The Decorational Compositions and the Technical Aspects of the Ornamentation

## 4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the motifs that ornament the architectural elements of the Byzantine Negev, were presented. These motifs are the components forming the compositions that are discussed in this chapter. One could define a composition as the placement of at least two motifs in a purposefully chosen arrangement. However, this definition excludes cases in which an architectural element is decorated by a single motif. In addition, it may be argued that in the case of decorated architectural elements, the location chosen for even a single motif is purposeful. This placement may not only bear a practical motivation, relating to the visibility of the decoration, but also a symbolic significance that is linked with the location within the structure of which the architectural element is an integral part. In light of this, the following analysis and discussion also include compositions that are the product of a single motif, which is engraved or carved in a clearly intentional location upon an architectural element.

The compositions formed through the seven categories of motif-types, elaborated upon in the previous chapter, can be separated into two distinct groups: "compositions of a single type of motif", and "hybrid compositions". The first group includes compositions formed only by motifs belonging to one of the seven motif categories as previously defined. They range from designs formed by a single motif to more complex ones, and are formed by up to six motifs, all of the same type; for example, compositions that are formed only by geometric motifs. The second group, "hybrid compositions", includes designs formed by at least two motifs of different types. For example, a decoration composed of two lions flanking an amphora is a hybrid composition, since it includes motifs of two types: the lions, belonging to the "faunal motifs" category and the amphora, which belongs to the "objects" category.

A further examination of the location of the decorations is presented subsequent to the analysis of the two types of compositions, with an emphasis on two aspects. The first aspect relates to the location of the decorated architectural element within a given structure, i.e. whether the element is located in a lower course of the structure (e.g. as a base) or as part of a higher course (e.g. as part of a decorated arch). The second aspect is more general and involves a quantitative comparison between elements that are located in public and domestic structures. Attempts should not be made to define conclusively the provenance of a decorated architectural element on the basis of the simplicity or complexity of its ornamentation, especially in the region of the Negev. This is further emphasized in Chapter VI. The components of motifs that form a composition, as well as its location, are not the only aspects to be considered when

analyzing the decoration of architectural elements. The procurement of the raw material and the organization of the labor are also discussed further on in this chapter.

# 4.2 Compositions of a Single Type of Motif

The previous chapter discussed seven categories of motifs, ranging from the abstract to the figurative. The vast majority of the ornaments are of the "geometric motifs" type. This quantity is also reflected in the greater amount of compositions, which are formed solely of these types of motifs. Out of a total of 243 compositions that are fashioned of a single motif type, 238 (!) are composed, exclusively, of geometric motifs. Only three are composed solely of rosettes, and one includes only a faunal motif. It is interesting to note that there are no compositions made solely of floral designs. This point is significant when one considers the fact that floral motifs are second in quantity to geometric motifs. The monotype compositions are described and discussed below, from the least frequent to the most common: compositions of a faunal motif, compositions of rosettes, and compositions of geometric motifs.

## 4.2.1 Compositions of a Faunal Motif

This category includes a singular element decorated with a composition formed of only one faunal motif: a lintel (OD.E.LT.12, pl. 137) discovered in the room west of the basilica of the South Church at Oboda. The lintel, as described in Chapter II, is broken and appears to have been decorated in its center with a bas relief of a schematically carved four-legged animal. It might have been a crude depiction of a roaring lion. The state of preservation of this element does not allow for a certain assertion regarding the symmetry of the composition. However, the distance remaining between the left edge of the lintel and the carved decoration, as well as the commonality of the symmetrical composition on other lintels in the assemblage, leads to the suggestion that this faunal ornament was most likely carved approximately, if not exactly, in the middle of the lintel.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Negev (1997), 148 (photo 239). Negev suggests that the lintel was also decorated with a "crudely carved cross". Although, there are some deeply engraved lines to the left of the "lion" figure that may form a cross shape, their arrangement and the state of preservation of the lintel do not allow the clear identification of this type of motif. For this reason, the decoration of the lintel is viewed as that of a monotype composition.

<sup>2</sup> The depiction of the animal appears to be located directly above the bottom edge of the front face of the lintel. This may not be the originally intended placement of the carving, as the bottom edge is seems to be broken. Therefore, there may have been a void between the animal's feet and the lintel's original bottom edge.

Although this lintel was discovered in an archaeological excavation, it was not found in situ. The location of the element, within the debris of a church complex, may indicate that it was originally part of its structure. Yet, it is possible that architectural elements of all types have been moved after the abandonment of the site. In addition, the style, the technical quality, and the subject matter of the decoration, do not bear any indication to the placement of this lintel, in either a seculardomestic or a religious-public context.

## 4.2.2 Compositions of Rosettes

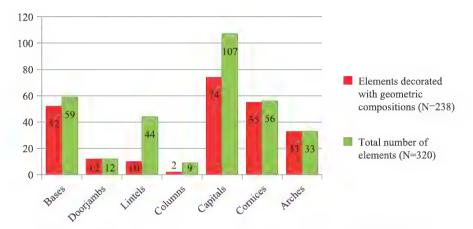
There are three architectural elements decorated with compositions that include only rosettes. All these elements are fragmentary lintels; therefore, it is possible that in some cases, the original composition did include additional types of motifs. One of the lintels is from an unknown site, and the other two are from Shivta. None are in their original structural context. As the provenance of these lintels is unknown no statements could be made regarding their contexts, either in the private or the public realms.

The first element, to be described, is a fragmentary lintel from an unknown site (NT.LT.27, pl. 309). The decoration includes a deeply carved "six-petal rosette" engraved within a sunken medallion. This decoration is located near either the left or right edge of the lintel. It is possible that the original composition included two additional rosettes, or a center decoration of another type that was flanked by two rosettes. Another lintel, in a similar state of preservation, is element SH.G.LT.16 (pl. 43), from Shivta. The decoration of this lintel is not of a "petaled rosette", but of a bas relief "wheel-spoke rosette". This fragmentary lintel is currently part of a step in a street in the western section of the site. Two additional lintel fragments, probably part of the same lintel, are elements SH.Q.1.LT.32 and SH.Q.1.LT.33 (pls.45-46). If indeed these two fragments could be joined together, their composition would be of three, symmetrically engraved and schematic "wheel-spoke rosettes". This type of composition may have also been carved on the two lintels, described previously.

### 4.2.3 Compositions of Geometric Motifs

This category includes compositions that are made only of geometric motifs. There are 25 compositions in this group, composed of a single type of geometric motif, while the rest are composed of a variety of geometric types. The greatest number of geometric motifs, joined together to form a single composition, is six. There are only three examples in the assemblage of this type of composition. This reveals a pattern similar to the one that emerged in the quantitative analysis of the motifs, namely, the more complex the design, the less frequently it appears.

The compositions formed solely from geometric motifs are by far the most common. These forms of composition appear on all types of architectural elements, in the assemblage, from bases to capitals, and lintels. The distribution of purely geometric compositions on the architectural elements is illustrated in the following Graph 15.



**Graph 15:** Distribution of Exclusively Geometric Compositions Compared to the Total Number of Elements in the Assemblage.

Graph 15 demonstrates the distribution of the geometric compositions, and compares the geometrically decorated elements with similar elements in the entire assemblage. It highlights differences between the types of elements that are more frequently decorated with geometric compositions, and those that are more often decorated with either non-geometric monotype compositions or hybrid compositions. The tendencies that emerge are that all doorjambs, arch segments, and nearly all cornices (except one) are decorated with geometric compositions. Bases and capitals are also more frequently decorated with geometric compositions. The most often-depicted elements, with hybrid compositions, are lintels and column bases. Only 26 percent of all the lintels, and 22 percent of columns, are decorated with monotype compositions. This comparison clearly shows the overall propensity to decorate the architectural elements with aniconic, and at times abstract, geometric compositions.

# 4.3 Hybrid Compositions

As previously demonstrated, the majority of architectural elements are ornamented with solely geometric compositions. However, there are twelve different combinations of hybrid compositions that adorn nearly all types of architectural elements. The types of architectural elements that are not decorated with hybrid compositions

are doorjambs and arch segments. The twelve types of hybrid compositions and the frequency of their appearance are presented in the following table.

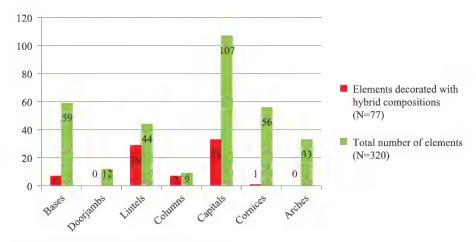
The twelve types of hybrid compositions presented in Table 15 are listed, from the least frequent to the most recurrent. It is interesting to note that, with the exception of the first two types of hybrid compositions, all other combinations contain geometric motifs. Not surprisingly, the most frequent type of hybrid composition is, by far, is the one created with the two most frequent categories of motifs: geometric and floral. Six out of the twelve types of hybrid compositions contain two different types of motifs. The rest are a combination of three or more types of motifs. This shows, again, a preference for more simplified, aniconic and abstract compositions.

Table 15: Types and Frequencies of Hybrid Compositions.

Type of Composition	Frequency
Faunal and Object	1
Architectural and Rosettes	1
Geometric, Rosettes, Faunal, Architectural and Object	1
Geometric and Faunal	2
Geometric and Architectural	2
Geometric, Floral and Architectural	2
Geometric, Floral and Faunal	3
Geometric, Floral and Rosettes	3
Geometric, Rosettes and Architectural	4
Geometric, Floral and Object	9
Geometric and Rosettes	13
Geometric and Floral	35
Total	76

The distribution of the hybrid compositions on the various types of architectural elements is demonstrated in the following graph.

Graph 16 is, in essence, an inverted image of Graph 15. It illustrates a comparison between the frequencies, in which all types of hybrid compositions appear, and the quantities of the types of architectural elements in the entire assemblage. This graph reveals the preference to create more elaborate compositions on lintels and columns, and to some extent also on capitals and bases. It may be the result of the surface area available for decorations on these architectural elements, but may also be related to the location and function of the artifacts that are decorated with the more ornate, hybrid compositions.



Graph 16: Distribution of Hybrid Compositions.

# 4.4 The Location of the Decoration

Two various aspects of the location of the decorated architectural elements can be analyzed. The first one is the location and function within a given structure, which the decorated elements have. The second aspect is the types of structures the inhabitants of the Negev preferred to decorate with ornate architectural elements.

The frequencies of decorated architectural elements are demonstrated in the following chart and graph.

Both Chart 17 and Graph 17 represent the same set of data illustrated, in two different ways. Chart 17 expresses the percentages of various types of decorated architectural elements within the entire assemblage while Graph 17 demonstrates the same data, but in value rather than percentage form. In both cases, architectural elements

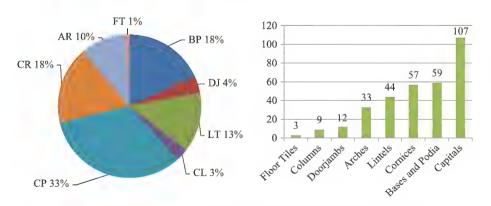


Chart and Graph 17: The Frequencies of decorated: Floor Tiles (FT), Bases and Podia (BP), Doorjambs (DJ), Lintels (LT), Columns (CL), Capitals (CP), Cornices (CR) and Arches (AR); (N=324).

from an undefined architectural context were excluded. In addition to discussing the tendencies highlighted in the chart and graph, it would be prudent to present some qualifications regarding the quantities of the various types of architectural elements, within the assemblage.

The vast majority of the capitals (99 out of 107) in the presently discussed assemblage (N=324) are doorjamb capitals rather than column capitals. There are two reasons for this apparent imbalance. First, doorjamb capitals were mostly carved in pairs, and ornamented both sides of entrances, in public as well as in domestic structures. Conversely, column capitals are usually part of larger public structures, such as churches, and therefore less of these types of elements existed. In some cases, church column capitals were carved of marble and not limestone, e.g. in the church at Elusa.<sup>3</sup> These types of capitals were not included in this study since it only deals with architectural decoration made of local chalk and limestone. The second reason for this imbalance is related to the form of the doorjamb capitals and bases. As shown through the analysis of the "zigzag pattern" band in the previous chapter, it is possible that doorjamb columns and doorjamb bases were interchangeable. It was impossible, in most cases, to discern whether the item was used as a capital or as a base; when this type of element was documented out of its original context and the decoration did not indicate otherwise. Using the logic whereby doorjamb capitals are more likely to be found in a collapsed state, due to their relatively precarious location within the structure, it has been decided to label all non-descript elements of this type as doorjamb capitals, rather than bases. It is more likely that the differences in quantity between the capitals and the bases category were smaller than they appear in the chart and graph.

Cornices are a relatively large part of the assemblage, at 18% (N=57) out of eight categories of architectural elements. The reason for this is that a typical room in a domestic structure or a church complex may often contain up to six decorated cornices. These form part of the engaged pilasters, which support the arches holding the ceiling. The cornices are typically located two courses below the springer. It is actually surprising that the assemblage does not include a higher percentage of cornices. This may stem from the interesting fact that cornices are a more common feature of the decoration of domestic structures than of church buildings. The quantitative data showing this are in the following Table 16. On the whole, the focus of most archaeological expeditions in the Negev was on public and elaborated structures rather than on domestic structures. This reason, coupled with the state of preservation of the structures in some of the sites, may explain the smaller quantity of cornices than one might expect.

<sup>3</sup> Arubas and Goldfus (2008), 1714.

Table 16: Distribution of both Geometric and Hybrid Compositions in Public and Domestic Structures.

Structure Type	Location	Floor Tiles	Bases	Floor Tiles Bases Doorjambs Lintels Columns Capitals Cornices Arches	Lintels	Columns	Capitals	Cornices		Subtotal	Total
	In Situ	3	23	2	1	0	4	5	4	42	
Church	Not in situ	0	11	3	11	9	17	9	10	99	106
Totals		3	34	5	12	9	21	11	14	1	1
:	In Situ	0	14	æ	m	0	4	28	0	52	70
Dwelling	Not in situ	0	2	2	9	2	15	1	9	34	8
Totals	ı	0	16	5	6	2	19	29	9	1	
Unknown provenance	Not in situ	0	9	2	22	Ħ	29	17	13	1	131
Varia					1 lintel –	1 lintel – Fort, possibly in situ (at Oboda)	y in situ (at	Oboda)			-
Total	-	8	59	12	44	6	107	57	33	1	324

Lintels form 13% (N=44) of the assemblage. Such quantity seems relatively high; when considering the fact that only one lintel decorates an entrance, unlike in the case of the doorjamb capital, base and the cornice. Arch stones, on the other hand, appear in a smaller quantity than can be expected, 10% (N=33). This may be the result of the higher frequency of collapse of arches, which supported, primarily, the ceilings of domestic structures and annexes of churches. Their number will perhaps increase with further excavations of the collapse heaps, left of the domestic dwellings. A recent excavation of a Byzantine structure on the acropolis of Oboda has already added a few decorated arch stones to this assemblage.4

Decorated door; ambs (4%, N=12), columns (3%, N=9) and floor tiles (1%, N=3) make up a smaller part of the assemblage. These quantities may simply reflect a diminished frequency of decoration of these types of architectural elements. Columns, in general, are more commonly used in church buildings than in private dwellings and therefore make up a smaller part of the assemblage.

In summary, it is interesting to note that the parts of the structure that were most often decorated are the entrances. An entrance to either a domestic structure or a church building could have been ornamented by two dooriamb bases, a decorated doorjamb on either side, followed by two doorjamb capitals, and topped with a decorated lintel. Most frequently, as can be seen in the catalogue (Chapter II), the paired doorjamb bases and capitals had similar, but not fully identical composition. The reason for this was probably a deliberate aesthetic choice, or a religious or an apotropaic intent, and not the technical inability of the artisans to create two identical decorated architectural elements. Entrances were decorated with a variety of compositions, both mono-typical and hybrid. The symbolic meaning and possible apotropaic value of these decorations is discussed in the following Chapter.

A discussion of the location of the decorations would be incomplete without an examination of the types of structures in which ornamentations appear. A representation of the distribution of the decorated elements in both public and domestic structures is provided in the following table.

In Table 16 the elements are distributed according to several divisions. The first division is according to the function of the elements within the structure. The second one is according to the type of structure: a church or a dwelling (if known). The third and last division is according to the state in which they were documented, i.e. in situ or not. The total number of elements, included in the chart, is 324. Out of these, slightly more than half (193) are elements with a known structural provenance. These 193 artifacts include both architectural elements documented in situ (N=95), and elements that were discovered in debrisof structures (N=98). The identification

<sup>4</sup> These elements have been studied courtesy of Dr. Tali Erickson-Gini of the Israel Antiquities Authority. These arch stones were decorated with paint, as well as with engravings.

of the location of the elements that were *in situ* is fairly certain. Although the specific provenance of the elements that were documented not in situ is not absolutely certain, the possibility that their location of discovery was within the structure they adorned can be taken into account. The tendencies revealed in Table 16 are surprising. Of the decorated elements documented in situ, 42 originate from church buildings, while 52 were documented within domestic structures. Of the elements not documented in situ, 64 originate from churches and 34 from dwellings. Overall, out of a total of 324 architectural elements, 33% of the artifacts originate in church buildings, and 27% in domestic structures. This negligible difference, in quantities between ornamented architectural elements from public versus private structures, rounds up to a mere 6%. This low percentage is quite an unexpectedly small difference, considering the greater attention given by archaeological expeditions to public structures, as well as their usually better state of preservation. The data presented here indicates that architectural ornamentation was an integral part of the lives of the inhabitants of the Negev during the Byzantine period. Ornamentation was not restricted to the public sphere, but was part of everyday life as well. In addition, one must remember that the settlements in the Negev were of varying centrality and not always located on main routes. Therefore, the decorations may have not only been part of structures necessarily owned by affluent people. The importance of the ornamentation and its meaning are further explored in the following chapter.

# 4.5 Technical Aspects of the Decoration

The entire assemblage of decorated architectural elements presented in the catalogue is made of local raw materials, namely, limestone and chalk.<sup>5</sup> These types of stones form the majority of the construction material, for all types of structures, in the settlements of the Byzantine Negev. Although the scope of the research does not allow for an in-depth geological analysis of the stones, the locality of the raw materials is attested to in the rock formations, in the vicinity of the settlements. This can be seen in the following sections from the Geological Map of *Israel* (Figures 3–8).

Generally, limestone and chalk were both used in construction, with ashlars of harder limestone forming the lower parts of structures, while the lighter and softer chalk can be seen in the upper sections. This method of construction can still be viewed today in the better preserved sites of the Byzantine Negev (Figure 9). Although it is clear that the qualities of these two types of stone were taken into account, and influenced their placement within the structure, this same selectiveness does not seem

<sup>5</sup> The raw materials were identified with the kind assistance of geologist Danny Itkin.

to have been applied regarding the decorated architectural elements. Decorated architectural elements were carved in both limestone and chalk, regardless of their architectonic function. One example of many is illustrated in Figure 10. Both lintels originate from the same church at Shivta, but were carved of different raw materials. One was carved in chalk and the other in limestone. The two lintels are currently located above two different entrances, leading from the atrium to the basilica of the North Church.

The flexibility in the choice of raw material for the decorated architectural elements may be related to the manner in which the building material was procured and worked. To the best of my knowledge, there is not much information about these processes in contemporary Byzantine texts. Nonetheless, some knowledge may be gained from a comparison to what is known of quarrying and stone dressing in other parts of the Israel, as well as in contemporary Jewish texts. Z. Safrai and A. Sasson, in their study of quarrying and quarries in the region of Israel, combined data from quarries that have been identified and excavated with references to this topic in Jewish literature of the period of the Mishnah and the Talmud (1st to 7th c. CE).<sup>6</sup> Safrai and Sasson classify several different types of quarries: from large stepped quarries used on a commercial scale, to the use of raw material extracted from the bedrock, in the process of the construction of an agricultural installation, or a cistern.<sup>7</sup> The study of quarries in the Negev, in some respects, is still in its infancy as quarries were usually not the focus of the archaeological research. For instance, in the case of Oboda, the excavator of the site identified four different types of stone, but only mentions the locations of two of the quarries from where they may have been extracted.8 This is a relative abundance of information compared to our unfamiliarity with the quarries that were used in the construction of the village of Shivta. These were not identified or looked for in the archaeological survey of the region.<sup>9</sup>

Some observations and suggestions can be made concerning the methods of obtaining raw materials, in the case of a well-preserved site such as Shivta. It appears that raw material for the construction of the site may have been obtained by several means; nearby quarries, the rock shelf on which the site was constructed and the rock in which installations and water cisterns were quarried. 10 The top section of what appears to be a chalk quarry was observed just a few hundred meters south of the site (Figure 11). It is likely that there were other such quarries from which limestone and chalk were obtained, in the areas surrounding Shivta. In addition, the

<sup>6</sup> Safrai and Sasson (2001), Hebrew.

<sup>7</sup> Safrai and Sasson (2001), 4-7, Hebrew.

<sup>8</sup> Negev (1997), 118.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication with Ya'aqov Y. Baumgarten of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Baumgarten conducted and published the survey of the region of Shivta; Baumgarten (2004).

<sup>10</sup> These propositions are preliminary and are based on a visit to the site with the geologist, Danny Itkin. I would like to thank Danny for his kind help in reaching these preliminary conclusions.



**Figure 3:** The raw materials available in the vicinity of Shivta (Adapted from the *Geological Map of Israel* 1998, Sheet 3).

 $\textbf{LEGEND} \ (\textbf{In parenthesis: lithology and maximal thickness}) \ of sedimentary formations in outcrop sections in Israel, in meters.) \ ^*Mapping units in Jordan$ 

q	Alluvium (Gravel, sand, silt, loess) - Quaternary
qs	Sand dunes - Quaternary
Is	Landslide - Quaternary
qt	Travertine - Quaternary
qk	Calcareous sandstone ("Kurkar") - Quaternary
ql	Lisan Fm. (Aragonite varves, sandstone, gravel, conglomerate, mudstone, gypsum; 45 m) - Quaternary
ngl	Lacustrine deposits* (Marl, sandstone, gravel) - Pliocene-Quaternary
nqc	Conglomerate units, undifferentiated - Neogene-Quaternary
Bn	Volcanic rock units, undifferentiated - Neogene-Quaternary
р	Pleshet Fm. and Sheva Fm. (Upper Mbr.); Mazar, Fm. (Conglomerate, sandstone, marl; 25 m) - Pliocene
ps	Sedom and Amora fms. (Salt, anhydrite, gypsum, dolostone, marl, sandstone, mudstone, conglomerate; +2300 m) - Pliocene
in	Intrusive and pyroclastic rocks (Basalt) - Miocene
mm	Ziqlag and Patish fms. (Limestone; 42 m) - Miocene
m	Hazeva Fm.; Dana Conglomerate* (Sandstone, mudstone, conglomerate, limestone, marl; +2000 m) - Miocene
e	Umm Rijam Chert-Limestone Fm.* - Eocene
ue	Bet Guvrin Fm.; Qeziot and Har Agrav fms. (Chalk, marl, limestone; 200 m) - Upper Eocene
eav	Avedat Group (Chalk, limestone, marl; 314 m) - Lower-Middle Eocene
emr	Maresha Fm. (Chalk; 100 m) - Middle Eocene
enm	Nizzana, Horsha, Matred and Nahal Yeter fms. (Limestone, chalk, chert; 215 m) - Lower - Middle Eocene
ea	Adulam Fm.; Mor Fm. (Chalk, chert; 150 m) - Lower - Middle Eocene
mp	Ghareb and Taqiye fms.; Muwaqqar Chalk-Marl Fm.* (Chalk, marl, clay) - Maastrichtian-Paleocene
mz	Hatrurim Fm. ("Mottled Zone") - Metamorphosed Maastrichtian to Miocene rocks
pa	Taqiye Fm. (Marl, clay, chalk; 63 m) - Paleocene
ma	Ghareb Fm. (chalk; 80 m) - Maastrichtian
ca	Mishash Fm.; Amman Silicified Lst. and Al Hisa Phosphorite fms.* (Chert, chalk, phosphorite, porcelanite, marl, limestone, dolostone, conglomerate; 126 m) - Campanian
-	Mishash Fm trace (Chert) - Campanian
sc	Menuha Fm.; - Wadi Umm Ghudran Fm* (Chalk, marl, chert, sandstone; 82 m) - Coniacian-Campanian
con	Zihor Fm. (Limestone, dolostone, marl; 52) - Coniacian
t	Bina Fm.; Derorim, Shivta and Nezer fms.; ora and Gerofit fms.; Shu'ayb and Wadi as Sir fms.* (Limestone, dolostone, marl, conglomerate, sandstone; 172 m) - Turonian
C	Hazera Fm. in Sinai, Naur, Fuheis and Hummar fms.*(Limestone, dolostone, chalk, marl) - Albian-Cenomanian
c3	Weradim Fm.; Tamar Fm. (Dolostone, limestone; 58 m) - Cenomanian
c2	En Yorqe'am, Zafit and Avnon fms.; Bet Meir, Moza, Amminadav and Kefar Shaul fms. (Limestone, dolostone, marl, chalk, chert; 210 m) - Cenomanian
£1.	Hevyon Fm.; Giv'at Ye'arim, Soreq and Kesalon fms. (Limestone, dolostone, marl, chalk, chert: 160 m) - Albian - Cenomanian

Figure 3 (continued)

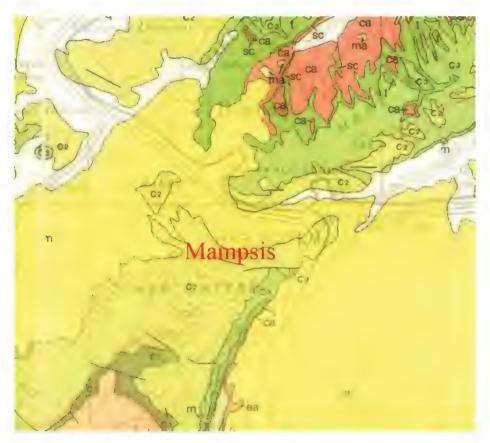


**Figure 4:** The raw materials available in the vicinity of Oboda (Adapted from the *Geological Map of Israel* 1998, Sheet 3).

**LEGEND** (In parenthesis: lithology and maximal thickness) of sedimentary formations in outcrop sections in Israel, in meters.) \*Mapping units in Jordan



Figure 4 (continued)



**Figure 5:** The raw materials available in the vicinity of Mampsis (Adapted from the *Geological Map of Israel* 1998, Sheet 3).

**LEGEND** (In parenthesis: lithology and maximal thickness) of sedimentary formations in outcrop sections in Israel, in meters.) \*Mapping units in Jordan

mm '	Ziglag and Patish fms. (Limestone: 42 m) - Miocene
m	Hazeva Fm.; Dana Conglomerate* (Sandstone, mudstone, conglomerate, limestone, marl; +2000 m) - Miocene
e	Umm Rijam Chert-Limestone Fm.* - Eocene
_ ue _	Bet Guvrin Fm.; Qeziot and Har Agrav fms. (Chalk, marl, limestone; 200 m) - Upper Eocene
eav	Avedat Group (Chalk, limestone, marl; 314 m) - Lower-Middle Eocene
emr	Maresha Fm. (Chalk; 100 m) - Middle Eocene
enm	Nizzana, Horsha, Matred and Nahal Yeter fms. (Limestone, chalk, chert; 215 m) - Lower-Middle Eocene
ea	Adulam Fm.; Mor Fm. (Chalk, chert; 150 m) - Lower-Middle Eocene
mp	Ghareb and Taqiye fms.; Muwaqqar Chalk-Marl Fm.* (Chalk, marl, clay) - Maastrichtian-Paleocene
mz	Hatrurim Fm. ("Mottled Zone") Metamorphosed Maastrichtian to Miocene rocks
pa	Taqiye Fm. (Marl, clay, chalk; 63 m) - Paleocene
ma	Ghareb Fm. (Chalk; 80 m) - Maastrichtian  Mishash Fm.: Amman Silicified Lst. and Al Hisa Phosphorite fms.* (Chert, chalk, phosphorite, porcelanite, marl,
ca	limestone, dolostone, conglomerate; 126 m) - Campanian
	Mishash Fm trace (Chert) - Campanian
sc	Menuha Fm.; Wadi Umm Ghundran Fm.* (Chalk, marl, chert, sandstone; 82 m) - Coniacian-Campanian
con	Zihor Fm. (Limestone, dolostone, marl; 52) - Coniacian
Tt.	Bina Fm.; Derorim, Shivta and Nezer fms.; Ora and Gerofit fms.; Shu'ayb and Wadi as Sir fms.* (Limestone, dolostone, marl, conglomerate, sandstone; 172 m) - Turonian
С	Hazera Fm. in Sinai, Naur, Fuheis and Hummar fms.* (Limestone, dolostone, chalk, marl) - Albiian-Cenomanian
c3 c2	Weradim Fm.; Tamar Fm. (Dolostone, limestone; 58 m) - Cenomanian En Yorqe'am, Zafit and Avnon fms.; Bet Meir, Moza, Amminadav and Kefar Shaul fms. (Limestone, dolostone, marl, chalk, chert; 210 m) - Cenomanian Hevyon Fm.; Giv'at Ye'arim, Soreq and Kesalon fms. (Limestone, dolostone, marl, chalk, chert; 160 m) - Albian - Cenomanian Kurnub Group (Sandstone, pebbly sandstone, marl, mudstone, clay, limestone, dolostone, conglomerate; 408 m) -
Ick	Lower Cretaceous

Figure 5 (continued)

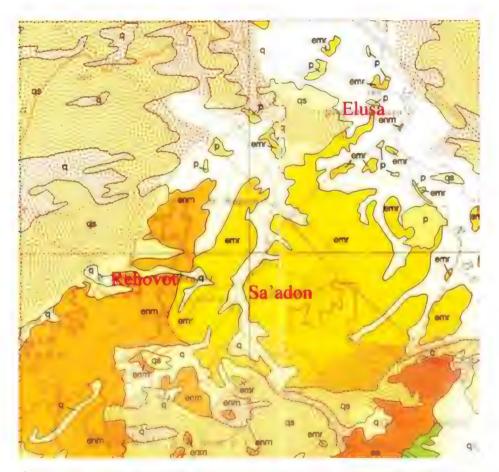


**Figure 6:** The raw materials available in the vicinity of Nessana (Adapted from the *Geological Map of Israel* 1998, Sheet 3).

**LEGEND** (In parenthesis: lithology and maximal thickness of sedimentary formations in outcrop sections in Israel, in meters.) \*Mapping units in Jordan



Figure 6 (continued)

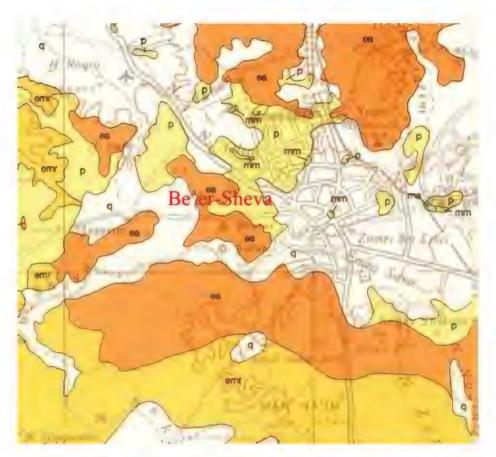


**Figure 7:** The raw materials available in the vicinity of Rehovot-in-the-Negev, Sa'adon and Elusa (Adapted from the *Geological Map of Israel* 1998, Sheet 3).

 $\textbf{LEGEND} \ (\text{In parenthesis: lithology and maximal thickness of sedimentary formations in outcrop sections in Israel, in meters.) *Mapping units in Jordan$ 

q	Alluvium (Gravel, sand, silt, loess) - Quaternary
qs [	Sand dunes - Quaternary
Is	Landslide - Quaternary
qt	Travertine - Quaternary
qk	Calcareous sandstone ("Kurkar") - Quaternary
ql	Lisan Fm. (Aragonite varves, sandstone, gravel, conglomerate, mudstone, gypsum; 45 m) - Quaternary
ngl	Lacustrine deposits* (Marl, sandstone, gravel) - Pliocene - Quaternary
nqc	Conglomerate units, undifferentiated - Neogene-Quaternary
βn	Volcanic rock units, undifferentiated - Neogene-Quaternary
р	Pleshet Fm. and Sheva Fm. (Upper Mbr.); Mazar, Fm. (Conglomerate, sandstone, marl; 25 m) - Pliocene
ps	Sedom and Amora fms. (Salt, anhydrite, gypsum, dolostone, marl, sandstone, mudstone, conglomerate; +2300 m) - Pliocene
in	Intrusive and pyroclastic rocks (Basalt) - Miocene
mm	Ziqlag and Patish fms. (Limestone; 42 m) - Miocene
m	Hazeva Fm.; Dana Conglomerate* (Sandstone, mudstone, Conglomerate, limestone, marl; +2000m) - Miocene
e	Umm Rijam Chert-Limestone Fm.* - Eocene
ue	Bet Guvrin Fm.; Qeziot and Har Aqrav fms. (Chalk, marl, limestone; 200 m) - Upper Eocene
eav	Avedat Group (Chalk, limestone, marl; 314 m) - Lower-Middle Eocene
emr	Maresha Fm. (Chalk; 100 m) - Middle Eocene
enm	Nizzana, Horsha, Matred and Nahal Yeter fms. (Limestone, chalk, chert; 215 m) - Lower-Middle Eocene
ea	Adulam Fm.; Mor Fm. (Chalk, chert; 150 m) - Lower-Middle Eocene
mp	Ghareb and Taqiye fms.; Muwaqqar Chalk-Marl Fm.* (Chalk, marl, clay) - Maastrichtian-Paleocene
mz	Hatrurim Fm. ("Mottled Zone") - Metamorphosed Maastrichtian to Miocene rock
pa	Taqiye Fm. (Marl, clay, chalk; 63 m) - Paleocene
ma	Ghareb Fm. (Chalk; 80 m) - Maastrichtian

Figure 7 (continued)



**Figure 8:** The raw materials available in the vicinity of Be'er-Sheva (Adapted from the *Geological Map of Israel* 1998, Sheet 3).

LEGEND (In parenthesis: lithology and maximal thickness of sedimentary formations in outcrop sections in Israel, in meters.) \*Mapping units in Jordan



Figure 8 (continued)

limestone rock shelf, on which the site was partially constructed, seems to have been also quarried for construction material. An example of this can be observed in a structure located in the southern part of Shivta, built partially directly on the rock shelf (Figure 12). The abnormally large ashlars, located in the lower course of this structure, may have been cut to such a size as a result of the vicinity of the raw material to the location where it was used.

The third suggested source for a sizable amount of the raw materials is the water cisterns that are located both within and in the vicinity of the site. Private cisterns that were located in households appear to be a common feature at Shivta and it is likely that the material that was taken out in order to create the cisterns was used for construction.11 An example of a large and well-preserved cistern located south of Shivta can be seen in Figure 13. The southern face of the cistern is reinforced with ashlars that were probably quarried in the process of constructing this reservoir.

<sup>11</sup> Shereshevski (1991), 78-79.



Figure 9: Courses of limestone and chalk, view of the outside of the southwestern corner of the North Church complex (photograph by the author).



Figure 10: Two lintels located at the North Church, Shivta. Top: carved in chalk (pl. 47). Bottom: carved in limestone (pl. 41) (photograph by the author).



Figure 11: The top section of what appears to be a chalk quarry located south of Shivta (photograph by the author).





Figure 12: Left: the rock shelf on which the structure was constructed, view to the east, Right; large ashlars quarried from the rock shelf, view to the south (photographs by the author).

The examples, previously provided, relate mainly to stones that were used in close proximity to the source of the raw material. It is clear, however, that this is not always the case. Some construction material had to have been transferred from a quarry to the construction site. This raises questions regarding the organization of the procurement of the raw material and the construction and dressing of the stones. Safrai and Sasson have shown, both from finds within the quarries and the literary evidence, that the stones were extracted from the walls of the quarries according to the size that was required, and then roughly worked, in order to reduce their weight and provide a more efficient transport to the construction site. Subsequently, the stones were conveyed to the site either on a donkey that could carry two stones weighing up to 48 kg each, or, in desert environments, on a camel, which could carry twice the load a donkey could. Once the stones were at the construction site, they were more finely worked and fitted for their purpose. The reason that large amounts of stone chips are not discovered, either at the quarries or around the sites, is that this production "waste" was further utilized; either for the making of lime plaster or in the construction of the site



**Figure 13:** Water cistern located south of Shivta. Top left: view to the east. Top right: view to the north. Bottom: view to the south, note the ashlars that were used to retain this face of the cistern (photographs by the author).

itself.<sup>12</sup> An example for the use of these stone chips as filler in the construction of a wall at Shivta can be seen in Figure 14.

An additional important ethnographic source for comparison, from which deductions can be made regarding construction methods and the organization of the work during the Byzantine period, is the traditional Arab house. It has been shown that many traditions of construction that were applied during Late Antiquity still appear in modern-day traditional Arab dwellings. Also, a similarity can be observed in the style of decoration of these modern day dwellings and that of the Byzantine period in the Negev (Figure 15). This similarity is not surprising considering that many of the ancient ruins were a source of raw material for the Arabs and Bedouins, and there is no doubt they were familiar with the architectural decorations of the Byzantine period (Figure 16).

The construction of the traditional Arab dwelling involved a hired professional mason who used a work force that included the property owner's family members. The professional builder organized all aspects of the construction, including the planning, the building and the dressing of the stones. The stones were not dressed in the

<sup>12</sup> Safrai and Sasson (2001), 8-12, 45, Hebrew.

<sup>13</sup> Cannan (1933); Hirschfeld (1995).





**Figure 14:** Chips of stones used as filler in the construction of a wall. Dwelling located in the insula northwest to the Central Church at Shivta (photographs by the author).





Figure 15: Left: Decorated lintel found in a traditional house at Yatta (Hirschfeld 1995, 122). Right: Inner decoration of a dome in Dar Shahin at Hebron (Hirschfeld 1995, 133).

quarries, but at the construction site itself. This included the decoration of architectural elements, which were carved by a professional mason. The skills of trade were passed on as an oral tradition, usually within the master builder's family. <sup>14</sup> The tools used for the dressing of the stones during the Byzantine period, were possibly similar to those used by traditional modern-day carpenters and stone-masons, using the chip-carving technique. <sup>15</sup> The wide range in the quality of execution of the decorated

<sup>14</sup> Cannan (1933), 12, 19; Hirschfeld (1995), 113-115.

<sup>15</sup> Cannan (1933), 16-19, pl. III; Rahmani (1988).



Figure 16: Decorated architectural elements originating from the site of Elusa and re-used in the construction of a traditional Bedouin dwelling (photographs courtesy of the British Mandate Period Archive of the Israel Antiquities Authority. File name: Khalasa 121).

architectural elements points to the many different people that may have been involved in the construction (Figure 17).



Figure 17: Two decorated doorjamb capitals from Shivta. Above: a capital from an unknown location (photograph courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority, see pl. 67) Right: a capital located in a dwelling used by the Colt Expedition (photograph by the author, see pl. 56).

# 4.6 Summary

The decorative compositions that adorn the architectural elements of the Byzantine Negev have several characteristics. They are composed of motifs that are repeated on different types of architectural elements. No regionality can be observed regarding the selection of certain motifs or compositions. The majority of the compositions include only one type of motif and in most instances it is a combination of various types of geometric designs. Most hybrid compositions also include a geometric element

alongside motifs from other categories. As was shown by the analysis of the motifs in the previous chapter, the simplest motifs are the most common. It also appears to be the case regarding the compositions that are created from them.

The repetition of the same motifs, however, does not reflect a lack of creativity. The compositions in this chapter could only have been classified into categories on the broadest of levels. The reason is the great ingenuity of the artisans in creating an endless amount of compositions from a limited amount of motifs. No two compositions are identical. Even when two architectural elements seem to have been paired together, there are small but apparently deliberate differences in their decoration. The architectural elements, most frequently decorated, were located around entrances: to structures and to rooms within them. Interestingly, the analysis has shown that architectural decoration was not reserved solely for public buildings, such as churches, but appears to be also a common part of the domestic structure and everyday life.

The architectural elements in this study, both in public and private structures, were carved in local limestone and chalk that was most likely quarried within and around the archaeological sites. The methods by which the structures were constructed, and the stones dressed during the Byzantine period, were probably similar to those used in the building of modern-day traditional Arab dwellings. The work force included the property owner's family and the work was overseen by a master mason that was also responsible for dressing the stones and carving the architectural decorations. The decoration is characterized by the large variety of the compositions and absence of a local and specific style of decoration that could be identified with any of the sites. The great variety of styles of decoration, and levels of execution of the carving, suggests that, perhaps, there were no organized schools, but that the dressing and decoration of the stones was carried out by locals who had varying levels of proficiency, and a great amount of creativity.

# 5 Insulation: The Symbolic Meaning of the Decoration

## 5.1 Introduction

The three previous chapters of this book centered primarily on the presentation of decorated architectural elements and their typology by location, function and style of decoration. Thus far, this study did not explore whether these motifs bear a religious, apotropaic or symbolic significance beyond their clearly decorative function. The semiotics of the architectural decorations of the Byzantine Negev is examined here on a motif rather than on a compositional level. The previous chapter showed that a typology of the compositions can only be created on a relatively broad basis and that there is a great variety of compositions created from a limited group of motifs. Therefore, it may be suggested that if indeed there was a symbolic significance in the decoration, the motifs rather than the compositions, were the units that carried the "message", whether to a fellow human being or a demon. Further, a combination of several motifs may have been, in simplified terms, a mean to convey a more complex "message" with a greater number of memes.

This chapter presents only motifs to which a symbolic significance can be proposed from reference and comparative literature. This does not indicate that the remaining motifs do not bear any symbolic meaning, but simply that whatever the symbolic meaning, it eludes our present understanding. In addition, it is the contention of this study that not all motifs bore a symbolic meaning and some were created simply for their decorative or aesthetic value. This does not necessarily mean that these motifs were separated from a larger context that did include other components with a symbolic, and perhaps an apotropaic function. For example, in the case of a decorated entrance to a room or a structure, it was quite common for more than one architectural element to be decorated. Therefore, simply because a doorjamb base was solely decorated with a sequence of moldings, that may not have borne a symbolic or an apotropaic significance, it does not mean that it was not an integral part of a larger decorational composition, e.g. in the case of the decorated doorjamb bases from Mampsis (pls. 185-186). The decorated architectural elements of an entrance, of which a doorjamb base was a part, included probably a lintel decorated with one or more motifs. These motifs did have, most likely, a symbolic importance. To the viewer and owner of this entrance, that doorjamb base did not stand on its own, and probably had a symbolic as well as an apotropaic meaning by proxy, as part of a decorational composition that included several architectural elements.

In addition, the study of the motifs in Chapter IV clearly showed that the artisans and patrons of the early Byzantine Negev strongly favored motifs that are non-figurative and therefore aniconic, specifically, on stone architectural elements.

The three most common groups are the geometric, the rosette-type and the floral motifs, with the geometric motifs outnumbering the two latter groups by a ratio of seven to one. In general terms, geometric motifs tend to be more abstract and their meaning may therefore be more obscured. Regardless of the propensity of the aniconic motifs on the architectural elements we must acknowledge the fact that some figurative decorations do exist on the architectural elements and that it is possible that many more figurative decorations appear in other forms of decorative media. One such example is the fresco in the South Church at Shivta. This, nowadays mostly faded fresco, is located in the southern apse of the church and includes human figures in its ornamentation; perhaps the scene of the transfiguration (Figure 18).1



Figure 18: Right: A suggested reconstruction of the fresco of the southern apse of the South Church at Shivta (Figueras 2006-2007, Figure 19); Left: The same fresco photograph by the author on January 16th, 2014.

Therefore, one should not assume that simply because stone architectural decorations tended to be non-figurative, the inhabitants of the early Byzantine Negev tended to avoid figurative art. The decorations presented in this study are part of a more complex artistic assemblage that included perhaps less-resilient media such as liturgical furnishings, mosaics, frescos and ornamented domestic artifacts.

The semiotic analysis of the motifs in this assemblage begins with the presentation of a sample of motifs from all categories, with suggestions for their symbolic significance. It is followed by an examination of the definition and the meaning of symbols, as they are presented in art history and archaeology, as well as in other related disciplines. In the first part of this chapter the motifs are presented according to the same typology that appears in Chapter IV. The number assigned to the motif in the Motifs Catalogue is located in parenthesis next to its name for crossreferencing purposes. The motifs within each of the typological categories are listed

<sup>1</sup> Figueras (2006–2007); Faran (2017); Linn, Tepper, Bar-Oz (2017).

in the same order that they appear within the catalogue, i.e. in order of stylistic complexity. Some parallels are provided, especially of symbols that appear in the decorations of culturally and chronologically related art works.

## 5.2 The Semiotics of the Motifs

#### 5.2.1 Geometric Motifs

#### 5.2.1.1 The Zigzag Pattern (no. 14)

In his seminal book Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, E. R. Goodenough noted that the zigzag line is the primordial symbol of water.

He suggested that the appearance of this motif over doorways of Romanesque churches was symbolic for "the flow of divine grace". A different interpretation was suggested by S. Ćurčić in his essay, "Divine Light: Constructing the Immaterial in Byzantine Art and Architecture". Ćurčić describes a motif that is a more complex version of the "zigzag pattern". It is composed of a series of adjacent triangular shapes, like the "zigzag pattern", but differs from it in its three-dimensional form (Figures 19 and 20). The zigzag motif is newly defined by Curčić as the "radiant frieze".

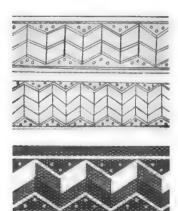


Figure 19: Fresco border details. Top: Serbian Churches, 13th c. Bottom: Chora Monastery Church, Constantinople, ca. 1320 (Ćurčić 2012, Fig. 11.12).

The "radiant frieze" appears in manuscript illuminations, frescos, mosaics and in brick and mortar works of the Byzantine period. Although the examples of the "radiant frieze" in architectural decorations that are presented in the article mostly

<sup>2</sup> Goodenough (1988), 48.

<sup>3</sup> Ćurčić (2012).



Figure 20: Arta, Church of Panagia tou Vrioni, 13th c.; east end, detail upper part of apse (Ćurčić 2012, Fig. 11.18).

originate in Balkan churches dating from the 10th century onwards, the similarity in form is notable. Through a comparative study of the "radiant frieze" as it appears in different media and the study of its location in the architectural decoration of various churches, Ćurčić proposes that this motif symbolizes, in physical terms, the notion of "Divine Light". It is further suggested that the origins of the design of the "radiant frieze" may be traced to the pagan concept of a radiant light as signifying divinity, such as in the case of the radiant crown.

The motif of the "zigzag pattern" in the present assemblage is a more simplified version of the "radiant frieze" in that the series of adjacent triangles that make up its composition are more "flattened" and two-dimensional. Nonetheless, it is suggested here that the symbolic formula of the "radiant frieze" of the latter part of the Byzantine period may also be applicable to the more simplified "zigzag pattern" of the early Byzantine Negev. It is important to mention that this motif is one of the most prevalent decorations of the architectural elements in the Negev, and appears not only in churches but also in dwellings, where it may have an additional apotropaic significance.

## 5.2.1.2 Star-like Shapes in Frames (no. 16)

According to J. Hall's *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, Christianity adopted the symbolic idea of the star as a representative of divinity from pagan Greek and Roman cultures. Hall points out that in The Book of Revelation Christ is described as

<sup>4</sup> Ćurčić (2012).

<sup>5</sup> Ćurčić (2012), 308-309, 323.

the "bright star of dawn". <sup>6</sup> J. C. Cirlot provides further interpretations to the semiology of the star, pointing out that it had more than a single meaning; this geometric shape also represented the spirit, especially in its struggle against the forces of darkness.

The catalogue Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House presents an amulet dated to the 5th or 6th centuries CE and originating from Syria or Palestine. This amulet contains an amalgam of plainly Christian images as well as magical symbols, one of which is an eight-pointed star (Figure 21). On its obverse there is an engraving of a nimbed rider spearing a prostrate demon. The top of the sphere is a cross with a pennant waving from it. To the right of the rider there is an engraving of a nimbed angel standing on a ladder, holding a staff and pointing at the vanguished demon. Above the angel's head is an eight-pointed star. Inscriptions on the face of the amulet and around its borders invoke divine protection. The design and inscriptions of the reverse of the amulet follow a similar formula. In this case, it may be suggested that the eight-pointed star bears the same function as the other Christian and possibly pagan symbols that appear on the amulet. The role of the scenes on the amulet is illuminated by inscriptions referring to the apotropaic purpose of protecting the owner of this object from "all evil". 9 It is possible that the star's location above the head of a figure of an angel may symbolize divine intervention.



Figure 21: Amulet, Syria or Palestine, 5th-6th c. CE, bronze, obverse. Note the eight-pointed star at the top right (Adapted from: Maguire, E. D., Maguire, H. P. and Duncan-Flowers, M. J. 1989, item 134, p. 214).

<sup>6</sup> Hall (1979), 289; Rev. 22:16.

<sup>7</sup> Cirlot (1971), 309.

<sup>8</sup> Maguire, E. D., Maguire, H. and Duncan-Flowers (1989), 214-215.

<sup>9</sup> Maguire, E. D., Maguire, H. and Duncan-Flowers (1989), 215.

The motif of the "star-like shapes in frames" appears both in reliefs and engravings in the assemblage of the architectural elements of the Negev. The motif resembles a star most when it is carved in relief as an eight-pointed star. An obvious similarity can be observed between the relief versions of the eight-pointed star and the four-pointed stars. A more simplified version of the four-pointed star appears in the assemblage as an engraved X shape. As this motif only appears with either eight or four arms, it is highly probable that the number of the arms of the motifs also bear a symbolic significance. For example, in presenting the apotropaic significance of the number eight, W. K. Prentice describes a Byzantine period prescription for the making of a ring that is to serve as an amulet against colic. The instructions clearly note that the hoop of the ring should be octagonal in shape. 10 The number four can be representative of the cross, the four Evangelists and the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, to name but a few examples. 11 Interestingly, although the "starlike shapes in frames" rarely appear singularly, on the whole the number of times this motif is carved varies. Therefore, it may be suggested that the single motif carried the symbolic importance and the number of times it appeared in the composition was a result of the size of the decoration and the surface that it adorned.

## 5.2.1.3 The Square and Rhombus Frame (no. 17) and the Medallions (no. 22)

The motifs of a frame that is formed either by the superimposition of a square and a rhombus or a medallion is noted by Prentice as frequently appearing on lintels of the Byzantine period in Syria. Prentice described these motifs as varying in size from two inches to six feet across and forming a frame for a variety of symbols; some that are clearly Christian and others, which he defines as pagan. In the case of the architectural elements of the Negev, a similar phenomenon can be observed. Square and rhombus frames and medallions appear most dominantly on lintels and are inhabited by both clearly Christian symbols such as crosses, and other symbols such as rosettes. Prentice suggests that these frames and the symbols they contained originate from paganism and that they were used from an age preceding Christianity, as well as during the Byzantine period, to "protect dwellings against evil spirits and to attract the powers of good."<sup>12</sup>

## 5.2.1.4 The Solar Disk (no. 18)

The "solar disk" is one of the rarest motifs in the assemblage. It occurs on three lintels from Mampsis (pls. 199–201) and on one doorjamb capital from Nessana (pl. 259). In the case of two of the lintels (pls. 199–200), the "solar disk" is placed in the center

**<sup>10</sup>** Prentice (1906), 138.

<sup>11</sup> Tresidder (2006), 166.

<sup>12</sup> Prentice (1906), 138-139.

of the composition, while on the third lintel (pl. 201) the composition is of two "solar disks" flanking a cross. In all three cases the motif appears as part of a composition that includes the motif of the cross; therefore, it is clear that all three lintels are connected to the Christian religion. The doorjamb capital from Nessana is decorated with a composition that also includes eight-pointed stars. In all of the above-mentioned instances, the "solar disk" appears as a semi-circular disk from which ray-like lines radiate. Although chronologically apart, it is interesting to point out the similarity between the "solar disk", as it appears in the assemblage, and the symbolic representation of the Egyptian sun god Aten (Figure 22). The worship of Aten was at its apex during the reign of the pharaoh Amenophis IV also known as Akhenaten (c. 1353) BCE). Aten was represented by the inanimate object of a disk with radiating rays and during this period the religion of ancient Egypt was nearest to a monotheistic and iconoclastic creed. Aten as a deity was very closely identified with the sun.<sup>13</sup> One may suggest that this ideological concept bears similarities in its symbolic intention



Figure 22: Akhenaten and his family present offerings to the Aten. Limestone balustrade from el-Amarna. Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Wilkinson 2003, p. 58).

<sup>13</sup> Wilkinson (2003), 37, 97, 236-240.

to the comparison of Christ's divine nature with light and the cosmic symbol of the sun during the Byzantine period. Therefore, it may not be surprising to find the "solar disk motif" as a dominant motif in compositions that contain other symbols such as the cross and the eight-pointed stars.

## 5.2.1.5 Crosses (no. 21)

The sign of the cross precedes Christianity by hundreds of years; it was a symbol for nature, strength, fertility, and cosmic forces in various cultures, ranging from the Americas to Asia. The cross has been represented in many different morphological manners before and since the dawn of Christianity. Before it became a symbol of Christ's sacrifice it was known as a pagan Sun sign and as a sign referring to the Aristotelian elements and the Pythagorean perfect number – four. During the emergence of the Christian religion, and even after the Emperor Constantine proclaimed it as a tolerated faith, the cross was less popular than other symbols, such as the Chi-Rho monogram as a symbolic representation of Christ. 14

The symbol of the cross appears infrequently in the present assemblage. On the 357 architectural elements that were documented in this study, the cross is represented only 30 times, in both religious and secular contexts. The crosses that were documented were "Greek crosses" with either straight or flared arms; some are minimalistic in design, while others are quite ornate. A few of the crosses contain additions that transform them into the Chi-Rho monogram. The crosses were rarely carved or engraved as the sole member of a composition and often appear with other symbols, such as rosettes and palmettes. An example of the cross appearing as an apotropaic symbol can be found on a terracotta mold for the creation of a eulogia stamp (Figure 23). This mold was discovered in the excavations of the Byzantine village of Anemurium (located in modern day Turkey) and dates to the same period as the Byzantine settlements of the Negev. The ornate cross appears in the middle of the stamp, surrounded by a Greek inscription that reads "Blessing of St. Raphael". 15 There is a striking similarity in the design of this cross with that of a cross appearing on a column drum found in the debris of the Central Church of Nessana (Pl. 247, Figure 24). In this case, the cross appears above a pyramidal shape formed by several semi-circles. This type of representation of a cross is not uncommon and is unanimously agreed upon by scholars to represent the cross on the Golgotha, thus, strongly alluding to Christ's sacrifice and symbolizing it.

<sup>14</sup> Healey (1977), 289, 294; Hall (1979), 77–78; Tresidder (2006), 146–147.

<sup>15</sup> Russell (1995), 41, Fig. 7.



Figure 23: Terra cotta mold for eulogia of Raphael, Anemurium (Russell 1995, Fig. 7).



Figure 24: A representation of the cross above the Golgotha on a column drum from the Central Church at Nessana (photograph by the author).

## 5.2.2 Rosettes

# 5.2.2.1 Wheel-Spoke Rosettes (no. 23), Whirling Wheels (no. 24) and Six-Petaled Rosettes (no. 25)

These three types of rosette motifs are discussed jointly as they share a common evolutionary origin. A. Reigl traces the development of the rosette to ancient Egyptian art, where the lotus blossom was represented in three views: a frontal view, a profile view and a combination of the two. The frontal view of the lotus blossom is the origin of the rosette motif. These types of rosettes typically have rounded petals (Figure 25).

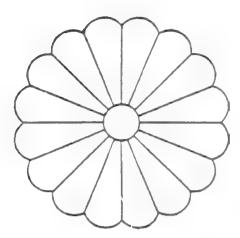


Figure 25: Lotus blossom in frontal view with rounded petals (rosette) (Reigl 1992, Fig. 12).

Later on the rosette also became a part of the ornamental repertoire of the Greco-Roman world.16

Both E. R. Goodenough and L. Y. Rahmani have demonstrated the great frequency in which rosettes appear in Jewish funerary art of the Greco-Roman period; their views on the symbolism of this motif, however, greatly differ (see discussion below). Goodenough expressed an encompassing definition of symbolic meaning and suggests that all of the geometric decorations possessed a symbolic significance, including the rosettes. However, he does not provide a more specific interpretation. 17 Rahmani, on the other hand, does not accept Goodenough's interpretation and states that the rosettes had no symbolic significance at all. 18 In a paper by M. Aviam he suggests a new interpretation for this motif in Jewish art. Aviam discusses the semiotics of the decoration of a stone base for a Torah stand, discovered in a 1st c. CE synagogue at Magdala (Migdal). One of the faces of the base is prominently decorated with a six-petaled rosette, surrounded by six shapes that mimic the shapes of the petals. This rosette is similar to ones that appear in the assemblage of decorated elements from the Negev. Aviam disagrees with Rahmani's view and provides a symbolic interpretation for the rosette:

<sup>16</sup> Reigl (1992), 49-57; cf. Reuterswärd (1986), 106, 116. These page numbers refer to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God" in this collection of reprinted essays as well as Reuterswärd (1986), 58. This page number refers to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God (II)" in this collection of reprinted essays.

<sup>17</sup> Goodenough (1988), e.g. 42.

<sup>18</sup> Rahmani (1994), 25-28.

"I suggest that it has a celestial symbolism. The complete circle of twelve petals can symbolize the heavens, the sky including the time frame of twelve months, an element which will later be replaced by twelve symbols of the zodiac. The number twelve has a special importance in Jewish traditions and its connection directly to the number of loaves on the Showbread Table and the cosmos is certainly clear through the only place where the number of loaves is explained by Flavius Josephus: "... the loaves on the table, twelve in number, the circle of the zodiac and the year ..."19

An additional cosmic interpretation is provided by art historian P. Reuterswärd. who examined various types of rosettes, including whirling wheels and wheelspoke rosettes that appear in different contexts and geographical locations throughout the Christian world. He observed that various circular motifs were used to represent the sun and the moon flanking the cross and therefore interprets them as cosmic symbols. Reuterswärd proposes that these types of rosettes should not be viewed as a lingering pagan sun cult, but, as forgotten symbols that represent Christ, especially when they appear in such contexts where one would expect to see a cross and not a circular cosmic emblem.<sup>20</sup>

Reuterswärd points out that rosettes and whirling wheels often appear also in conjunction with the cross - a phenomenon that can also be observed in the Byzantine Negev. He suggests that:

"...they should be viewed as symbols of the cosmic power emanating from the cross, and not as a cosmic "background" to Golgotha... It would seem that a circular symbol, be it a whirl, a floral or star-like rosette or a wheel, was deemed necessary to give a complete rendering of God. The circular emblem has its place above the cross with the same right - and probably in the same sense – as did the metaphors of light in the writings of the Church fathers."21

More specific interpretations are also offered in Reuterswärd's work for the three distinct types of rosettes. The "wheel-spoke rosette's" origins are traced to the Old Testament apocalyptic vision of Ezekiel: "for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels" (Ezekiel 1:21). Reuterswärd proposes that the wheel was considered to embody the passion and the light in Ezekiel's vision and thus became one of the most dynamic of all cosmic symbols. It is interesting to note that although wheels with eight spokes are not an uncommon representation throughout the Christian world of the Christogram, <sup>22</sup> none of the "wheel-spoke rosettes", in our assemblage

<sup>19</sup> Aviam (2013), 214.

<sup>20</sup> Reuterswärd (1986), 103. This page number refers to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God" in this collection of reprinted essays. Cf. Wittkower (1939), 319, for an additional reference to the spoked wheel as a cosmic symbol for the sun.

<sup>21</sup> Reuterswärd (1986), 108. This page number refers to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God" in this collection of reprinted essays.

<sup>22</sup> Reuterswärd (1986), 109, 112. This page number refers to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God" in this collection of reprinted essays. Another interpretation has been suggested regarding

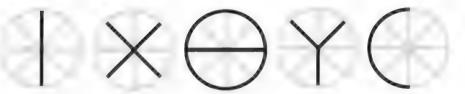
are of this type. All of the "wheel-spoke rosettes" documented for the purposes of this study have a varying number of spokes, depending on the diameter of the motif and the thickness of the "spokes". The second type of rosette, the "whirling wheel", is simply a more kinetic version of the "wheel-spoke rosette", representing a cosmic device, perhaps a star, and may be a sign of Christ or his cosmic nature.<sup>23</sup>

The compass made "six-petaled rosette" is the second most common type of rosette in the repertoire of architectural decorations in the Negev. These rosettes are of two main types: rosettes that are formed of six lozenge-shaped petals (type 25a in the motifs catalogue, Ch. III) and rosettes that also include six additional lozenge shapes around the circumference of the rosette (type 25b in the motifs catalogue). Reuterswärd interprets this type of rosette also as a cosmic emblem, and provides examples where this motif is present in place of a cross, as a symbol of Christ, Although most of Reuterswärd's examples are from later periods, and are derived from Scandinavia (e.g. where "six-petaled rosettes" are drawn on church walls and used in the liturgy as consecration crosses), it is suggested here that his interpretation be viewed as an ethnographic illustration for the symbolic meaning of this emblem.24

## 5.2.2.2 Four-Petaled Rosettes (no. 26)

The four-petaled rosette has not been grouped with the other types of rosettes because it bears a unique Christian symbolism. Two of the four-petaled rosettes that appear on fragmented lintels from Shivta (pls. 48 and 49) are clearly vegetal in their designs. Another fragmented lintel from Shivta (pl. 50) bears a different type of a four-petaled rosette. This rosette is clearly formed between the arms of a "Greek cross" with flared arms. Here the arrangement of the petals is in an 'X' format to accommodate the dual design. In all three cases the rosettes, in a manner

the wheel with the eight spokes and its representation of the ICHTHYS (IX $\Theta$ YC) acronym/acrostic by T. Rasimus; this is represented succinctly in the following diagram produced by this scholar (Rasimus 2012, Fig. 5):



- 23 Reuterswärd (1986), 103. This page number refers to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God" in this collection of reprinted essays; Reuterswärd (1986), 47-48. These page numbers refer to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God (II)" in this collection of reprinted essays.
- 24 Reuterswärd (1986), 48-50. These page numbers refer to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God (II)" in this collection of reprinted essays.

dissimilar to rosettes in the previous category, all have petals that are truncated at their ends by the medallion they inhabit. This phenomenon was observed by Reuterswärd as occurring on various types of decorated stone elements in Western Europe. Reuterswärd defined this motif as "a purely Christian cosmic emblem", noting that it does not appear, as in the case of the other types of rosettes, in the pre-Christian era. He suggested that this motif combines the representation of the cosmic circle with a symbol of Christ and that it was developed in Italy and from there spread to southern France and was used by the end of the 7th century in Ireland.<sup>25</sup>

Although Reuterswärd's symbolic interpretation is highly convincing, the appearance of this motif in the Negey, in a possibly earlier context, conflicts with his interpretation of the origins and diffusion of this design. Furthermore, a lintel from Mampsis is decorated with a composition that seems to be a type of "missing link" in the development of the "cross and four-petaled rosette hybrid" (pl. 201, Figure 26). The "Greek cross" with flared arms is surrounded by a simple circular medallion. The outline of the medallion is cut by four petal-like shapes that are carved, in sunken relief, in the spaces formed in-between the arms of the cross. It is interesting to note that this design is flanked on either side by two additional cosmic symbols in the form of two sundisks. It could be cautiously suggested that this lintel might be a representation of the transformation from the pagan to the Christian cultures in the Negev.





Figure 26: Above: lintel MP.A.7.LT.45 from Mampsis. Right: detail of the center of the composition with the shapes of the four-petaled rosette and cross

highlighted (photograph by the author with additional Photoshop highlights by Patrice Kaminski).

#### 5.2.3 Floral Motifs

## 5.2.3.1 Palmettes (no. 27)

The origins and development of the palmette motif were traced by Reigl to the same source as the rosette; that is – ancient Egyptian art and the blossom of the lotus.

<sup>25</sup> Reuterswärd (1986), 116-119. These page numbers refer to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God" in this collection of reprinted essays.

However, as opposed to the rosette, the inspiration for the palmette was the profile view of the lotus flower. In time, the motif migrated and became a recurring element in ancient Greek art. During the classical period the motif was, in a sense, "acanthusized" and developed a similarity to the leaves of the acanthus plant. Part of the evolution of the acanthus-like palmette included more stylized and twodimensional versions that later appeared in Roman art, preceding its appearance in the realm of Byzantine ornamentation.<sup>26</sup>

The palmettes of the Negev are depicted as whole as well as half-palmettes and at times as a combination of both. Although in some cases this motif appears in a quite naturalistic form that may be more reminiscent of acanthus leaves, this is a relative rarity (e.g. on a doorjamb capital from Rehovot-in-the-Negev, pl. 288). Most of the whole and half-palmettes of the assemblage are very stylized and relatively twodimensional. The appearance of this motif spans the gamut from scallop-like to schematized leaf. In most cases the palmettes are of the schematized leaf variety. Reigl convincingly demonstrated how the palmette initially mimicked the lotus plant and later, in a culture less familiar with the lotus, evolved to mimic the shape of a different plant, the acanthus; there is no reason why, during the Byzantine period, this motif could not have evolved once more. I would like to suggest that the palmette may have begun to be identified with the palm branch along with its symbolic significance, which was appropriated by the Christians from the pagan religion.

The Romans regarded the palm branch as a symbol of victory. This symbolic meaning was adopted in Christianity to denote not just victory, but more specifically victory over death. The palm branch appears in various Christian traditions: as an attribute of the Christian martyr; a palm branch was handed to the Virgin Mary by an angel at the annunciation of her death; the Virgin Mary handed a palm branch to John the Evangelist on her deathbed, and thus this plant became one of his attributes; and palm branches were borne by those meeting Christ upon his entry to Jerusalem;<sup>27</sup> to name but a few examples. J. Daniélou further investigated the symbolism of the palm branch in Christianity and its connection with the Jewish feast of Tabernacles and concluded that it is also a messianic symbol. The palm alludes to the appearance of the Messiah "like the rising sun, on the Mount of Olives during the feast of the Tabernacles." This imagery is associated with the image of Christ appearing on the Mount of Olives at the time of his entry to Jerusalem.<sup>28</sup>

It is worthwhile to note that in the assemblage of decorated architectural elements in the Negev the palmette appears solely as part of the decoration scheme of entrances and predominantly on doorjamb capitals (38 capitals and only three doorjamb bases). Although there are instances where palmettes are the only motifs

<sup>26</sup> Reigl (1992), 188-228.

<sup>27</sup> Hall (1979), 231-232.

<sup>28</sup> Daniélou (1964), 12.

forming the composition, the arrangement is quite often that of two half-palmettes flanking a wide range of motifs, from geometric motifs to floral and faunal ones.

## 5.2.3.2 Trefoil Leaves (no. 28)

Reuterswärd interpreted the lily or trefoil leaf as part of the symbol of the Tree of Life and suggests that, apart from these symbols representing a paradisiacal landscape, they may have also been symbols of God/Christ. His interpretation is based mainly on observations of the appearance of these motifs in conjunction – and with similar dominance - in compositions that included other symbols of Christ (such as the cross and the holy lamb) in Scandinavian churches.<sup>29</sup> While Reuterswärd's interpretation originates mainly from visual themes, Daniélou provides a similar interpretation which is founded on early texts, of Jewish as well as Christian origins. Daniélou presents the symbolic association of the planation with the Church and that of the Tree of Life with Christ.<sup>30</sup>

There are various types of trefoil leaves that appear on the architectural elements in the Negev. They range in appearance from small leaves formed of three rounded lobe shapes (e.g. pl. 249) to ones that bear a closer resemblance to the fleur-de-lis emblem (e.g. pl. 42). The trefoil leaf is known as a symbol of the trinity and in later periods, in the form of a lily, it had a Mariological significance.<sup>31</sup> One should note that in most cases, the trefoil leaf appears as part of a composition that contains the cross as a dominant motif, and appears either in close proximity to the cross, or as stemming from it. In the case of this study, a connection to the symbol of the Tree of life may be suggested.

## 5.2.3.3 Vine Scrolls and Grape Clusters (no. 29)

The vine is a pre-Christian symbol of fertility as well as of the Roman god Bacchus (and the earlier Greek god Dionysus). The existence of this pagan sign continued to appear in Christian art, but with a metamorphosis of its symbolic intent. Apart from being a sign of the Eucharist, the vine, its components and the vineyard gained a new symbolic significance. Daniélou has shown that some of the Christian symbolism regarding the vine evolved from the Old Testament and that, as with many other symbols, the vine also signified various aspects of the Christian faith and at times was also identified as the Tree of Life. In John 15: 1-7 Christ refers to himself as the vine, the husbandman is his father and the shoots are the members of the

<sup>29</sup> Reuterswärd (1986), 148-151. This page number refers to the article titled "The Lion, the Lily, and the Tree of Life" in this collection of reprinted essays.

**<sup>30</sup>** Daniélou (1964), 32–34 and passim.

<sup>31</sup> Cirlot (1971), 51; Reuterswärd (1986), 148. This page number refers to the article titled "The Lion, the Lily, and the Tree of Life" in this collection of reprinted essays.

faith.<sup>32</sup> In a passage which was, in a sense, further elaborated upon by Hippolytus of Rome: the vine is a symbol of Christ; the shoots are the saints and those who believe in Christ; and the grape clusters are the martyrs; to list but some of his interpretations.<sup>33</sup>

The vine and grape cluster motifs on the decorated elements appear both as scrolls that form medallions, which are in turn inhabited with other Christian symbols (an imagery device that is common in mosaic pavements), as wavy bands, and at times, grape clusters also appear individually. The vine and grape cluster motif does not appear individually and could either be interpreted as forming a paradisiacal background, or as a symbol of the Church, Christ, the believers, or a combination of all of these.

#### 5.2.4 Faunal Motifs

## 5.2.4.1 The Eagle (no. 30b and possibly 30c)

The symbol of the eagle pre-dates Christianity, for example, as an attribute of various deities and as a military emblem in the ancient Roman culture.<sup>34</sup> Eagles also appear in ancient Jewish art, particularly in the form of relief sculptures in synagogues, where the image is interpreted as representing a servant of God, similar to an angel.<sup>35</sup> In Christianity this bird of prey is the attribute of John the Evangelist, and is one of the four beasts of the Apocalypse (Rev. 4:7).<sup>36</sup> The four main early Christian literary themes in which the eagle is a dominant symbol were illustrated by R. Wittkower as:

"...the bathing in the Fountain of Life, and the sharpening of the beak, which stand for rejuvenation through baptism and penance; the flight towards the sun as a symbol of intrepidity, or in other words of the unshakable belief in Christ; and the fight against the snake as the victory of Christ over Satan."37

Furthermore, Wittkower examined various images of the eagle, produced in a variety of mediums, and in particular the image of the eagle vanquishing the serpent. His conclusion was that the eagle may, amongst its other symbolic meanings, also be a symbol of Christ.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Daniélou (1964), 35-41; Hall (1979), 322; Maguire, E. D., Maguire, H. and Duncan-Flowers (1989), 24.

<sup>33</sup> Daniélou (1964), 37.

**<sup>34</sup>** Hall (1979), 109.

**<sup>35</sup>** Werlin (2006), 155.

<sup>36</sup> Hall (1979), 109.

<sup>37</sup> Wittkower (1939), 314.

<sup>38</sup> Wittkower (1939), 319, 321 and passim.

The eagle, in the present assemblage, appears to be carved on two doorjamb capitals, one form Oboda and the other from Nessana (pls. 152 and 260). In both cases the execution is very schematized and the bird appears with outstretched wings. In the case of the eagle on the doorjamb capital from Nessana; the eagle appears flanked by two half palmettes and above a band of "zigzag pattern". In the center of the head of the bird there is a motif that looks like a single eye. I would like to suggest that this may be an apotropaic device designed to ward off the "evil eve", a common apotropaic theme in the art of early Christianity.

## 5.2.5 Architectural

#### 5.2.5.1 A Column (no. 36)

The symbol of the column or pillar, like many of the other symbols discussed in this chapter, originates in the pre-Christian era. It is part of a group of cosmic symbols (containing among others the emblem of the cross) that symbolizes the "axis of the world". When two columns appear, they may represent eternal stability, and the space between them, the entrance to eternity.<sup>39</sup> The Greeks and Romans often surmounted a statue of a god (especially Jupiter) at the top of a column to symbolize his celestial habitat. 40 In Jewish tradition God is manifest in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, guiding the Israelites at all times during their exodus from Egypt (Exod. 13:21–22). In the New Testament the pillar or column is referred to as a symbol of spiritual strength and steadfastness (Rev. 3:12). 41 In Christianity the column also represented Christ in his capacity as the creator and the cornerstone of the universe, as "the axis of the world". 42

In the present assemblage, two different types of columns are represented: columns with plain shafts and columns with a spiral shaft (the latter are more prevalent). The column with the spiral decoration may represent a path leading to heaven.<sup>43</sup> All of the columns appear on lintels. On the complete lintels there are two columns and it may be assumed that in the case of a fragmentary lintel the second column did exist. The correlation of the appearance of two columns, always on lintels and with other cosmic symbols appearing in the composition, hints at the symbolic role of this motif. I would like to suggest that in the case of the Byzantine Negev, the columns may have represented not only stability but also a portal to a cosmic realm, perhaps heaven, and the entrance to eternity.

<sup>39</sup> Cirlot (1971), 60.

**<sup>40</sup>** Hall (1979), 247.

**<sup>41</sup>** Hall (1979), 247.

<sup>42</sup> Reuterswärd (1986), 60. This page number refers to the article titled "The Forgotten Symbols of God (II)" in this collection of reprinted essays.

<sup>43</sup> Hall (1979), 247.

M. Avi-Yonah has suggested that the morphologically related **niche (no. 37)** and arcade (no. 38) motifs are a symbol representing the Church, in the same way that similar symbols have represented the temple and the synagogue in the earlier pagan and Jewish cultures. 44 This hypothesis appears highly logical especially when one examines a capital from Shivta, which was studied by Avi-Yonah, and was also reexamined for the purposes of this study. 45 This doorjamb capital is decorated with an engraved depiction of an arcade, possibly the frontal view of several niches or apses. In the upper parts of two of the arcades there are clear engravings of crosses.

## 5.2.6 Objects

## 5.2.6.1 The Amphora (no. 39)

The few amphora motifs, which may also be representations of a kantharos, which appear in the repertoire of architectural decorations in the Negey, can be divided to two groups: amphorae whose body frames other motifs; and amphorae whose body is decorated with designs that may mimic an actual vessel. The latter group is the more common type. In all nine cases, the amphorae appear alongside a vegetal motif, most commonly palmettes, and trefoil leaves. The amphora is an emblem that symbolizes eternal life and appears in such a context also in funerary art. $^{46}$ 

# 5.3 Discussion and Conclusions

In the first part of this chapter, the possible symbolic and apotropaic meaning of some of the motifs appearing in the assemblage was presented. This survey raises a few questions and highlights terms that require definition regarding the semiotics of the decorations: How is a symbol defined? Can a symbol have more than one meaning? And lastly, what is the function of a symbol in general and specifically in the Byzantine world? These questions have been explored not only in the fields of archaeology and art history but also by psychologists and anthropologists. It would be difficult to sum up the entire body of work regarding semiotics, but, it is important for the purpose of this study to examine some of the different points of view regarding the study of symbolism.

In the field of psychology, C. Jung studied symbols mainly as manifestation of the unconscious and as an important element in the interpretation of dreams. Nonetheless, he did consider religious symbols extensively and referred to them in

<sup>44</sup> Avi-Yonah (1981), 38-44.

<sup>45</sup> Avi-Yonah (1981), 42, Fig. 13; doorjamb capital SH.CP.51, pl. 71, in the present catalogue; cf. Segal (1988), 75-76.

<sup>46</sup> Tresidder (2006), 127.

some of his writings and lectures. Jung considered religious dogmas in the same manner in which he regarded myths. In his view, the appearance of similar central mythological themes appearing in different cultures was the result of a collective unconscious. In essence, concluding that all people share the same archetype of the collective unconscious. For Jung, God was also considered to be an archetype, and one that is specifically linked to the archetype of the self. In his analysis, this link was created by religion teaching man that God is far away and inaccessible and at the same time stressing his immediate presence and realness. Jung defined symbols as having a finite life span, in the sense that they are a reference to an unknown entity. Once a better way of expressing this same entity is found the pervious symbol ceases to exist. In essence, the existence of the symbol depends on the person regarding it.47

The anthropologist C. Geertz studied religious symbols more extensively and interpreted them as a means by which a culture could synopsize its knowledge of the world, its emotional content and the way in which the individual should behave while in it. Sacred symbols, through ontology and cosmology, provide a society with its aesthetics and ethics. Geertz also notes that there are a limited number of sacred symbols in all cultures and that they cannot exist without a connection to the metaphysical.48

A. Gell also examined symbols from an anthropological perspective as well as their appearance in art. He particularly stressed the significance of geometric, nonrepresentational ornamentation from an anthropological perspective. Gell suggests that artifacts are decorated with the intent of "attaching people to things" and therefore decoration is fundamentally functional. Furthermore, in his analysis he concludes that even patterns that fulfill an apotropaic function are created to form an attachment; in this case, an attachment between the demons and the pattern, the pattern acting as a trap. For instance, in the case of a knot pattern, the evil spirit is expected to be so captivated by the complicated knot, that it will lose the ability to perform any evil action.49

All three above-mentioned scholars noted the universal significance of symbols and specifically religious symbols to humankind. Apart from the definition of a symbol as a sign that bears a special meaning to whomever regards it. The question still remains: did symbols only have the one specific meaning for the Byzantine viewer? In his work, Earth and Ocean - The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art, H. P. Maguire illustrates, mainly through literary examples, how symbols did not hold the same value to all in the early Christian world. Debates existed whether certain plants and animals should bear particular symbolic values; for example, in the

<sup>47</sup> Carlsson (1970), 33-39.

<sup>48</sup> Geertz (1973), 127.

<sup>49</sup> Gell (1998), 73-84.

case of the dove signifying the Holy Spirit. Additionally, in many cases, symbols had multiple meanings and Maguire suggests that various symbols should be interpreted metaphorically. At times the specific meaning of a symbol would be contingent on its specific context. The multiple meaning that a symbol had added to its depth and significance. This ambiguity complicates the interpretation of symbols for the modern scholar, but was welcomed by the early Christian artist and viewer.50

Although some motifs may have contained more than a singular symbolic meaning, it does not mean that all decorations were indeed meant to be symbolic. This question was dealt with extensively in the case of decorated Jewish ossuaries. I believe that it would be pertinent, by way of comparison, to examine the different ways in which various scholars approached this topic regarding these stone containers, some of which bore motifs similar to those that appear in the Byzantine Negev. Three different approaches to this subject will be subsequently presented; one that regards all decoration as endowed with some form of symbolic significance; one that suggests that some motifs contain an apotropaic or symbolic value; and a third, which states that none of the geometric decorations on the ossuaries held a symbolic significance.

In his study of the Jewish symbols in the Greco-Roman period, Goodenough suggested that these signs were not perceived in the same manner by the Jews as they were by the pagans. In order to better understand the occurrence of pagan symbols in Jewish art, Goodenough initially examined whether these motifs were functioning as symbols or whether they were created purely for a decorational purpose. This brought forth the problem of defining symbols. Goodenough defines a symbol, for the purposes of his study of as:

"...an object or a pattern which, whatever the reason may be, operates upon men, and causes effect in them, beyond mere recognition of what is literally presented in the given form."51

Goodenough presents some definitions afforded to symbols by the discipline of psychology, where symbols are defined as any pattern or shape that can be bestowed with a symbolic meaning by an individual, whether the shape is abstract (such as in the case of Rorschach blot) or not. This of course stresses the need of the human psyche to give a non-literal meaning to an object or pattern as an unconscious way of making sense of the world.

This reflects the important role that symbols may have but not the function of religious symbols. These are the kind of symbols that are recognized by a culture to have one or more specific meanings. The origin of these symbols could be newly invented, but quite often, as Goodenough observed, they were also appropriated from other, preceding cultures. For example, in the case of the cross, the swastika

<sup>50</sup> Maguire (1987), 5-13.

<sup>51</sup> Goodenough (1988), 40.

and the rosette: all symbols that have pre-dated Christianity, but were resurrected and given new meaning in the Christian culture.<sup>52</sup> Goodenough explains that this mobility of symbols was possible because:

"...people used symbols which could pass thus from religion to religion precisely because the forms did not have any literal, denotative meaning; they spoke to a level of consciousness or mentality much less concerned with precision, but much richer and more important, than the level that responds to denotation. Christianity and Judaism alike rejected Dionysus and his rites and myths with horror, while they kept his symbols. They rejected the specific and kept what I may call the subspecific – linguistically subspecific, that is."53

This "linguistically subspecific" meaning of symbols implied that the interpretation of symbols is a task which may quite often leave the interpreter with many uncertainties. Goodenough's contention is that simply because there are no clear literal indications to the specific symbolic meaning of the geometric and formerly pagan motifs, it does not mean that they were void of symbolic content.<sup>54</sup>

Figueras, in his study of the decoration of Jewish ossuaries, also pointed out the difficulties in ascertaining any symbolic meaning that the motifs may have had given the lack of historic literature on the matter. He proposes that initially the decoration was a symbol of the benevolence of the relatives of the deceased and may have also simply depended on the financial capabilities of the commissioner. Figueras does not state unequivocally that the decoration had no apotropaic or allegorical symbolic meaning, but that such an interpretation depended on both the one who decorated the ossuary and its recipient. He suggests that in the case of symbols that were not originally Jewish, but were borrowed from the pagan Roman culture, the motifs may have lost their original symbolic meaning or that the meaning was adapted to fit the beliefs of the Jewish observer.55

L. Y. Rahmani, in his catalogue of Jewish ossuaries, observed that there are a few recorded examples of non-decorated ossuaries and that most ossuaries are only decorated on one side. He also noted that the artisans were not restricted in their design and that this liberty was reflected in the appearance of motifs that are removed from their original context. By and large, Rahmani rejected Goodenough and Figueras' ascription of symbolic meaning to the decorations that appear on Jewish Ossuaries. Rahmani's arguments were several. He argued that if the ornamentation had a symbolic or apotropaic meaning, then the people who were buried in undecorated ossuaries were deprived of that protection. Rahmani also suggested that the inconsistency in the context and order in which the motifs appear suggest that they did not have a specific symbolic significance. In addition, he interpreted

<sup>52</sup> Goodenough (1988), 37-49.

<sup>53</sup> Goodenough (1988), 51.

<sup>54</sup> Goodenough (1988), 51-56.

<sup>55</sup> Figueras (1974), 3-5.

the lack of contemporary literature on the subject of the symbolic meaning of the motifs and the lack of inscriptions referring to the decorations in the tombs as another indication that they had no symbolic significance.<sup>56</sup>

Consequently, to the review of the above differing opinions, it would be relevant to connect them to the study of the semiotics of the architectural decorations of the Byzantine Negev. As was shown in the first part of this chapter, some suggestions can be made as to the symbolic meaning of some of the motifs that are part of the present assemblage. In concordance with Maguire's study, it is logical to assume that certain symbols have come to represent a multiplicity of concepts. A single symbol may represent God, Christ and the Church all at once. This probably did not confuse the observer, but made the symbol stronger and deeper. I accept Goodenough and Figueras' views that the lack of contemporary literature on the meaning of symbols is not an indication that some of the more obscure motifs were lacking in significance. By way of comparison, there is a lack in contemporary literature regarding the symbolic meaning of the architecture of Roman temples. This does not mean that the form of the structure did not bear a symbolic significance, but simply that it was so clearly symbolic that perhaps it did not warrant further literary explanations.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, it is possible that certain decorations, such as moldings or perhaps motifs such as beads-and-reel patterns, were purely decorative. However, it is important to stress that in the case of the Negev it appears that even such motifs were probably part of a larger decorational scheme, which did include decorational compositions with a clear symbolic meaning. One cannot ignore the prominence of symbolism in the life of the early Christian believer in the Negev. This importance may have stemmed from the additional role that these motifs carried, besides their representational value – their apotropaic significance.

In their catalogue E. D. Maguire et al. illustrated that everyday objects and their decorations can provide much insight to the attitudes of the people of the early Byzantine period. They observed that objects had a meaning beyond their practical function; the symbolic motifs that these artifacts were decorated with evoked, for the believer, unseen forces and provided apotropaic protection. These motifs were divided into two general categories: motifs of non-Christian character and motifs that are essentially Christian in nature. For the early Christians, all of these motifs fulfilled the same function in averting evil and attracting good fortune.<sup>58</sup>

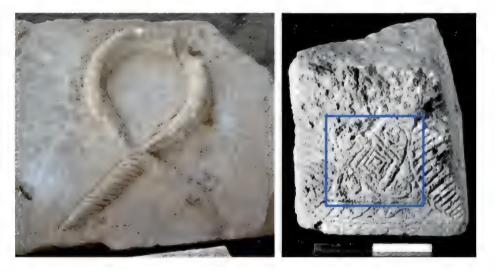
A comparison can be made between the main motifs that are elaborated upon in the catalogue of early Christian domestic artifacts, and the decorated architectural elements of the Negev. Maguire et al. began by presenting the non-Christian motifs that were designed to "deflect misfortune" and provide protection. The first

<sup>56</sup> Rahmani (1994), 25-28.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas (2007), 53.

<sup>58</sup> Maguire, E. D., Maguire, H. and Duncan-Flowers (1989), 1-3.

motifs in this group are the knots and interlaces. Prevalent examples are the Herculean knots and the Solomonic knots, which appear as protective symbols in floor mosaics, mostly in the vicinity of entrances to public and private buildings.<sup>59</sup> These motifs are by far more common in mosaic decorations than in architectural sculpture, but there are two possible examples in the assemblage for such designs. A Herculean knot is carved on a lintel originating from the debris of a storeroom of Building XII at Mampsis<sup>60</sup> and a knot of Solomon can be found on a doorjamb capital from an unknown site in the Negev (Figure 27, pls. 202 and 332). Interestingly, in both of these examples the apotropaic signs appear on architectural elements that would have decorated entrances, as it is in the case of the mosaic floors that contain these motifs. Of the additional motifs listed in the same group, such as the knots and interlaces, the only one that can be found on the stone decorations of the Negev is that of the octagonal designs.<sup>61</sup> This motif mainly appears on lintels and is similar to the motif that is defined in the present study as the "square and rhombus frame".



**Figure 27:** Left: detail of a Herculean Knot on lintel MP.LT.15 from Mampsis (photograph by the author). Right: depth or front side of a doorjamb capital from an unknown site in the Negev (NT.CP. 23), decorated with a Solomon's knot (photograph courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority).

The second group of non-Christian motifs that is described in the catalogue of Maguire *et al.* is that of the "designs invoking prosperity". Of these motifs, the one that also appears in the lithic decorations of the Negev are creatures and plants. In

<sup>59</sup> Maguire, E. D., Maguire, H. and Duncan-Flowers (1989), 3-4.

<sup>60</sup> Negev (1988b), 86-87, photo 81.

<sup>61</sup> Maguire, E. D., Maguire, H. and Duncan-Flowers (1989), 3-9.

the case of creatures and plants appearing on domestic artifacts, their function, which was gleaned with the help of relating inscriptions and the function of the object on which they appear, was more than just a depiction of abundance, but an invocation for the wealth that these images represented. 62 The interpretation of the apotropaic meaning of these motifs on everyday items cannot be unequivocally transferred to mean the same in regards to architectural decoration. Although it is possible that some of the floral motifs, and the few faunal motifs in the present collection were created with the hope of invoking prosperity, some additional suggestions have been previously discussed, regarding some of the more prevailing designs, belonging to this category.

The Christian designs that are described in the catalogue of domestic artifacts include both figurative designs, such as saints and biblical scenes, geometric designs – specifically the cross, and lastly various inscriptions. <sup>63</sup> By comparison, the architectural decorations of the Negev are generally non-figurative and therefore no identifiable images of saints and biblical scenes can be discussed. However, crosses and inscriptions have been documented in the present collection, although they are by no means the most prevalent motifs. It is important to point out that in a total of 357 elements thoroughly documented in this study; there are only 40 crosses, some of which appear twice on the same element. As for inscriptions, the vast majority are the combinations of the *alpha* and *omega* and the *Chi-Rho* Christogram. Interestingly, in all instances where combinations of letters appear on architectural elements, they appear together and in combination with the sign of the cross as if to strengthen its symbolic significance. Of the 40 crosses, 36 are located on architectural elements that were used in the construction of an entrance possibly alluding to the apotropaic significance of this symbol. This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that crosses can be equally found on entrances in domestic structures and church buildings. The phenomenon of crosses and apotropaic inscriptions of magical formulas was noted as appearing on Byzantine period lintels in Syria by W. K. Prentice. In his comparative study Prentice purports that the dominance of inscriptions and apotropaic symbols, both of non-Christian and Christian nature, is not an expression of piety, but a means of protecting one's dwelling from demons and evil spirits.<sup>64</sup> I would like to suggest that this practice was also prevalent in the Byzantine Negev.

In summary, in the previous paragraphs I have discussed the universal meaning of symbols as it is defined through the fields of anthropology and psychology. This is of course a very broad approach and therefore I have also presented the general view of symbolism in the Byzantine culture as it is reflected in contemporary literature. The former part of this synopsis suggests that all ornamentation might

<sup>62</sup> Maguire, E. D., Maguire, H. and Duncan-Flowers (1989), 9-16.

<sup>63</sup> Maguire, E. D., Maguire, H. and Duncan-Flowers (1989), 16-33.

<sup>64</sup> Prentice (1906).

have a symbolic significance, either to denote appropriation of property or as a means of understanding the universe. The latter part of the overview also presents a wide-ranging view, but discusses how symbols function specifically within the Byzantine culture and how, one symbol could even represent several meanings. Subsequently, it becomes apparent that the question of whether all ornamentation is symbolic, especially within the Late Antique world still remains. For this reason I have reviewed the differing opinions regarding this issue as they presented themselves in the studies that examined the decorations and ornamentation of Roman period Jewish Ossuaries. This scholarly literature is more specifically related to the question of whether all of the ornamentation in the Byzantine Negev bears a symbolic significance, since some of the motifs appearing on these ossuaries continue to exist within the Byzantine culture. Finally, it remains for me to discuss the conclusions I have reached regarding the meaning of the architectural decorations in the Negev through the examination of specific motifs appearing in the assemblage and the review of the above studies. Although, my research is limited by the scope of this study, I hope that the question of the symbolic meaning of the ornamentation and especially that of aniconic, and specifically geometric motifs, will be further explored in future studies.

The conclusions that can be reached at this stage of the research are that it is clear that some of the motifs appearing on the architectural elements in the Negev had a symbolic significance that could be suggested on the basis of comparisons. These comparisons were through literature (both contemporary and scholarly), other artifacts bearing similar motifs, and also through the use of ethnography (similar motifs being used in later Christian contexts where their symbolic meaning is known). On the one hand, to claim that all decorations on the architectural elements must have had a symbolic meaning would be a misleading generalization; on the other hand, one should not disregard the observation that it is likely that most decorated elements were part of a greater scheme of decoration in which some elements were decorated with symbolic motifs. In addition, the fact that many of the decorated elements were located around entrances and the fact that architectural decorations were just as much a part of the domestic realm as the public one, leads to the suggestion that some of the decorations carried an apotropaic purpose. It seems that besides the aesthetic aspect of the ornamentation, symbolism was also an important factor in the everyday and spiritual life of the inhabitants of the Negev.

# 6 The Neighborhood: Comparisons to Architectural Decorations in Surrounding Regions

#### 6.1 Introduction

Thus far, the present study centered exclusively on the stone architectural decorations of the Negev region. However, the inhabitants of the Negev did not live in isolation; they were part of a wider cultural world. In order to define better the characteristics of their decorative art and understand its sources of influence, a brief comparison with the art of the surrounding regions is required. For this purpose, a few examples of architectural decorations from Syria, Jordan and Egypt are presented. The decorated architectural elements provided as examples from the regions surrounding the Negev are made of local raw materials, mainly from limestone and basalt. Although basalt is harder than limestone, the decorations carved on elements made of this local material still reflect the local culture, regardless of any technological differences that may exist in their production.

## 6.2 Syria

A general survey of the literature concerned with Byzantine architectural decoration in Syria reflects the qualities it shares with stone ornamentation in the Negev, and highlights the differences. Overall it appears that the same motifs that appear in the Negev are also common in Syria. However, the variations in the quality of the carving of the decorations are greater in Syria than they are in the Negev, from rough carvings and engravings to high quality carvings. For instance, the lintels of dwellings located in southern Syria, shown in Figures 28 and 29, reflect carvings of a relatively low quality for this region. This level of workmanship is quite common in the Negev and these decorated elements would fit quite well in the previously presented assemblage.

The level of workmanship presented above is not necessarily typical of decorated architectural elements that are located in domestic contexts. Figures 30 and 31 present two lintels from dwellings in northern Syria that are decorated with a much more advanced level of craftsmanship. Here, too, the motifs are similar to ones found in the Negev. These two elements are decorated with a variety of rosettes, a flared armed Greek cross and even a zigzag pattern. The difference is that these floral and geometric motifs are carved with more details in each of the medallions and more time was spent providing depth to the ornamentation. Such quality of decoration cannot be found in the Negev.

A ciborium from a church in Kafrantin in northwestern Syria, demonstrates that the difference in the quality of workmanship of the stone decoration of churches and that found in dwellings was not great (Figure 32). This ciborium is



Figure 28: Lintel set in secondary use in a wall in a dwelling at Jmareen in southern Syria (Bopp 2006, pl. 41:b).



Figure 29: Lintel in a dwelling at Kafr Shams, southern Syria (Bopp 2006, pl. 82).

decorated with a plethora of motifs, some of which are located in close proximity, as in the case of the multi-framed medallion at the top of the element. This is a phenomenon that is quite rare in the Negev.

It appears that the artisans and patrons in Syria preferred more elaborate compositions than the ones that appear in the Negev region. This predilection is apparent when one examines two groups of motifs which were defined by G. Tate in his study of the construction methods in the villages of northern Syria. The first group was defined by Tate as the simple medallion type and the second as the complex



Figure 30: Decorated lintel at the hostelry at Surganya, northwest Syria (Peña 1996, p. 154).



Figure 31: Lintel in a dwelling at Dalloza, northwestern Syria (Peña 1996, p. 222).

medallion type (Figures 33 and 34). Interestingly, the medallions belonging to the first group are closest in appearance to similar types of decorations in the Negev. Parallels to the second, more complex group of inhabited medallions cannot be found in the Negev.

<sup>1</sup> Tate (1992), 109–110. Although Tate suggested that there is a developmental pattern in the motifs that were chosen, he emphasized that these motifs cannot be used to precisely date structures, but merely to provide a *terminus post quem*.



Figure 32: Church ciborium at Kafrantin, northwestern Syria (Peña 1996, p. 223).

To summarize, the motifs that adorn the architectural elements in Syria are mostly similar to motifs that can also be found in the Negev. The differences between the two regions are in the quality of the carving and the complexity of the compositions. It appears that the artisans of the Negev had less skill than the artisans of Syria and invested less time in creating the ornamentation. This difference is compounded by the fact that many of the elaborately decorated elements in Syria originate in dwellings and are carved in basalt: a stone that is much harder to work than the softer limestone and chalk of the Negev.

## 6.3 Jordan

The study of Byzantine architectural decoration created of local raw material in Jordan is not as developed as it is in Syria.<sup>2</sup> However, some comparisons can be made to decorated architectural elements, made of local stone that bear similar motifs to ones found in the present assemblage. The first example is of a lintel from the church of Saint-Etienne at Um er-Rasas, decorated with three inhabited

<sup>2</sup> Sodini (2003), 123.

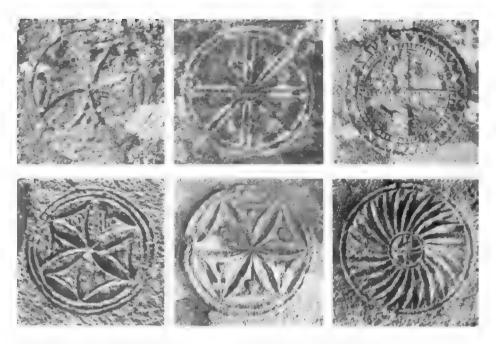


Figure 33: Inhabited motifs defined by Tate as medallions of the simple type (Tate 1992, Fig. 160).

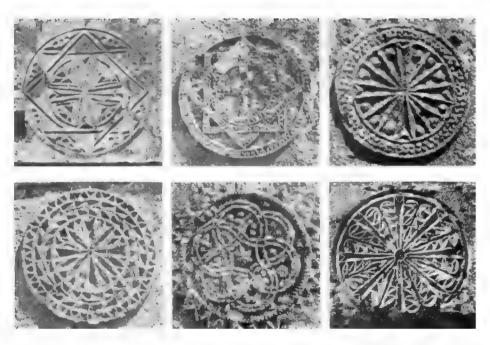


Figure 34: Inhabited motifs defined by Tate as medallions of the complex type (Tate 1992, Fig. 161).

medallions (Figure 35). The ornamentation of the two flanking medallions is reminiscent of lintel MP.A.7.LT.45 (pl. 201) from Mampsis.

Examples of motifs similar to ones found in the Negev can also be seen on capitals from the churches at Abila and Mount Nebo (Figures 36 and 37). In Figure 36, the capital on the left bears a schematized carving of whole palmettes, while in the



Figure 35: Lintel from the church of Saint-Etienne in Um er-Rasas, Jordan (Sodini 2003, Fig. 35).

capital on the right a whirling-wheel rosette can be observed. In Figure 37, the cross in the center of a capital from Mount Nebo, is similar to the cross on a capital from the South Church at Shivta (SH.P.CP.105, pl. 64). In all three cases, the level of execution is more refined than the one on the architectural elements of the Negev and the density of motifs is greater.

Comparisons between the art of the Negev and that of Jordan during the Byzantine period must also take into account the question of the influence of Nabatean art in the region. J. Patrich, in his study of the formation of Nabatean art, discusses the sources of influence of Nabatean art forms and their influence on subsequent cultures in the region, Although Nabatean art has unique characteristics, it was also greatly influenced by Hellenistic and Roman traditions both in construction methods and artistic depictions. Later on, it may have had some influence on Islamic art.4 The influence of Nabatean art on Christian artistic traditions seems to be less clear. It is very likely that the population of the Negev included a large component of an ethnically Nabatean population.<sup>5</sup> However, this population had previously been greatly influenced by external cultural customs and during the Byzantine period was even further removed from its original language and artistic traditions. It could be suggested that the Byzantine art of the Negev was not greatly influenced by Nabatean art and has little ties to it.

<sup>3</sup> Patrich (1990).

<sup>4</sup> Patrich (1990), 191.

<sup>5</sup> Patrich (1990), 31; Nagar (1999), 111-119 (Hebrew).



Figure 36: Two capitals from the Church at Abila (Sodini 2003, figs. 16-17).



Figure 37: A capital from the church at Mount Nebo (Sodini 2003, Fig. 19).

## 6.4 Egypt

The previously discussed examples from Syria and Jordan were of decorated architectural elements carved in local raw materials, but not necessarily limestone. Two of the following examples from Egypt are of architectural elements carved of the same raw material as that used widely in the Negev. The first is a limestone capital from the monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara (Figure 38). This capital is decorated with wind-blown acanthi, a motif common in Coptic art of the Byzantine period, but does not appear in the Negev. At the top of the capital there is a depiction of a Greek cross. The overall workmanship of the capital greatly exceeds that of any of the decorated elements found in the present assemblage.

<sup>6</sup> Török (2005), 207.



Figure 38: Limestone capital, dated to the mid. 6th century from the monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara (Török 2005, item 140, p. 207).

Another element carved in limeston but bearing a decoration somewhat similar in quality to that of the artifacts found in the Negev is a cornice block (Figure 39). There are no parallels to similarly shaped cornices in the assemblage, but the workmanship is similar to some of the more ornate elements from the Negev. It is interesting to note that no ankh-crosses were found on architectural elements from our region and that the shell is a relatively rare motif in the Negev.

The last architectural element to be compared with the elements from the Negev is a sandstone mortuary stela of an unknown provenance (Figure 40). In this case, too, some of the motifs may be similar to designs found in the repertoire of the Negev, but the workmanship is by far more accomplished. For example, there are some depictions of birds on various types of elements from the Negev, but none appear as naturalistic as the eagle on the present stela. This may reflect the different



Figure 39: A limestone cornice block, dated to the late 5th – first half of the 6th century CE, probably from el-Bahnasa (ancient Oxyrhynchos) (Török 2005, item 105, p. 160).



Figure 40: Sandstone mortuary stela from an unknown site, dated to the 7th century CE (Török 2005, item 106, p. 161).

abilities of the craftsmen of Egypt in comparison with those producing decorated architectural elements in the Negev.

## 6.5 Summary

In summary, the overview of architectural decorations from the regions surrounding the Negev demonstrates varying qualities of decorations in all regions. All of the examples of decorated elements discussed in this chapter were produced in local raw materials and originate in the public and the private spheres. The motifs chosen to form the decorative compositions in the Negev are of the same repertoire that can be found in Syria, Jordan and Egypt, suggesting a tight cultural connection. In the regions surrounding the Negev there appears to be a vast range in the quality of the decoration of various elements; from relatively simplistic designs to quite complex and high-quality carvings. This great range in decorations made of

local raw materials does not exist in the Negev. Therefore, it is highly likely that the artisans working in the Negev, unlike their contemporaries in other regions, were locals and not as skilled. This may be an indication that there were no schools or workshops for the training of stone dressers, but that the stone carving traditions may have passed from one local craftsman to another.

## 7 Finishing Touches: Synthesis and Conclusions

#### 7.1 Introduction

The most distinctive qualities of the decorated elements are discussed in the first part of the present chapter. These include the shared traits of the architectural elements, such as similarities in form, and the subject matter of the decoration, as well as the differences in the ornamentation. Issues related to the technical sides of producing these artifacts are also elaborated upon. These include the existence of pattern books, the procurement of the raw material, and the division of labor. In the second part of the chapter I elucidate the inability to observe a chronological and developmental pattern within the assemblage. The knowledge gained from a survey of all of the previously listed aspects and the comparison to architectural decorations in other regions, provides a comprehensive depiction of the unique characteristics of the decorated architectural elements of the Negev. In the final part of the chapter, the potential for future research of the architectural decorations of the region is demonstrated.

## 7.2 The Characteristics of the Stone Architectural Decorations of the Byzantine Negev

The similarities and differences between the decorated architectural elements in the major Byzantine settlements of the Negev are highlighted in Chapters II to IV. The principal similarities are in the shape and profile of the architectural elements, the subject matter of the decoration, and the method of its execution. The main differences are in the decorative compositions, which are varied not only among the sites, but also within them. The similarities and differences are hereby elaborated upon, along with additional pertinent topics regarding the production of the stone architectural decorations.

#### 7.2.1 The Similarities in the Shapes and Profiles of the Architectural Elements

The catalogue in Chapter II, and its accompanying plates and plans, present all of the decorated architectural elements analyzed in this study. An examination of the artifacts shows that the most common shared traits are related to the physical shape of the architectural elements. The similarities in the shapes and profiles of the architectural elements are subsequently summarized according to function.

The bases and podia category includes two different types of bases and one type of podium. The most common type of base is the doorjamb base. This type of architectural element is located below the doorjamb, at an entrance to a room or a building. For this reason, doorjamb bases are carved as pairs. The shape of the doorjamb base is of two monolithic types. The first is a rectangular ashlar with two decorated, protruding trapezoidal facets, one at the front and the other on the depth side of the base. The second type has the form of a rectangular ashlar with one decorated, protruding trapezoidal facet, located on the front of the element, sometimes at its center. Doorjamb bases are a common decorational feature in churches and dwellings. The second type of base is a column base, located at the bottom of a circular column, These types of bases can be found predominantly in churches. As opposed to the above-described base types, the podium is composed of two monolithic stones placed one on top of the other in a mirror-image formation. The bottom stone has a rectangular base, above it the face of the element slopes inwardly and connects to another rectangular part of the element. All four sides of the podium are decorated. These types of podia were only documented at the Central Church in Shivta (pls. 21–30).<sup>2</sup> The most common type of base at all sites is the doorjamb base with the twoprotruding decorated trapezoidal facets.

Decorated doorjambs are composed of rectangular ashlars, placed one on top of the other, on their vertical axis. The front sides of these ashlars are decorated continually along the length of the doorjamb. Typically, the doorjambs on both sides of the entrance are decorated with the same type of composition. The decoration usually includes sequences of bas and sunken relief moldings. Decorated doorjambs can be found, both in churches and in dwellings.

Decorated lintels are rectangular monolithic ashlars, placed on their horizontal axis, above entrances and often resting on decorated doorjamb capitals. The width of the lintel changes according to the width of the entrance. Decorated lintels adorn churches, dwellings, and entrances to rooms within these structures.

Decorated columns are not common in the present assemblage. All of the columns are circular and most likely originate in churches. Some columns are decorated with lathe-made decorations and some with reliefs. Typically, column drums have hemispherical depressions on the upper and lower flat surfaces of the column segments. These depressions serve a technical purpose in the joining together of the column drums in the formation of a unified, complete column, and may reflect a canonization of construction techniques throughout the entire region of the Levant.

<sup>1</sup> In the present assemblage there is one example of a column base from a dwelling located in Building XII in Mampsis (MP.A.2.BP.51, pl. 189). This dwelling has several phases dating both to the Roman and the Byzantine periods. Therefore, it is possible that this column base may date to the Roman and not the Byzantine period.

<sup>2</sup> A similarly shaped doorjamb capital was documented in the South Church at Shivta, pl. 42.

The assemblage includes two types of decorated capitals: the doorjamb capital and the column capital. The first type is the most prevalent. The shape of the doorjamb capital is the same as that of the doorjamb base. Similarly, there are two types. The first is a rectangular ashlar with two decorated, protruding trapezoidal facets; one on the front and the other on the depth side of the element. The second type is composed of a rectangular ashlar with a single decorated, protruding trapezoidal facet, on the front side of the capital. Elements of this shape are placed with the trapezoidal facet's narrower side at the top as doorjamb bases and in an inverted fashion as capitals. Doorjamb capitals are also carved in pairs and are located in private and public structures. Column capitals are particularly rare in the assemblage and originate in church buildings.

Decorated cornices are of two types: a cornice that is part of the decoration of an engaged pilaster and a cornice that ornaments the higher section of a wall. The first type is more common. The engaged pilaster cornice is carved as a trapezoid-shaped ashlar. These types of cornices are either decorated solely on their front side or on all three of the exposed sides. The cornice is part of the engaged pilaster that supports the ceiling arches, and is most frequently located either directly below the springer or one course below it. This type of cornice is usually placed with its narrower side at the bottom with its facets sloping inwardly. Most engaged pilaster cornices in the assemblage are decorated in a minimalistic manner with a flat, upright and smooth band at the top, and a sunk fillet band at the bottom. The engaged pilaster cornice is more prevalent in domestic rather than public architecture. The second type of cornice typically ornaments the higher section of apse walls. This cornice is most commonly carved as a continuous ovolo molding that follows the curving contour of the wall.

Arch stones are carved as wedge-shapes and with a slightly curved top and bottom. The decorated side has a somewhat trapezoidal silhouette and is typically one of the narrower facets. Rarely, when both front and back of the arch can be viewed, the voussoir is decorated on both the opposing, narrower sides. In addition, in a few instances the arch stones are decorated on the bottom face. In these cases, the decoration can be seen when the viewer stands below the arch. The decoration of the arch stones includes both engraved and relief-carved ornamentations. Ornate arches were used in the decoration of both public and domestic structures. Arches ordinarily spring from engaged pilasters and support ceilings, or are part of the construction and ornamentation of entrances.

#### 7.2.2 The Similarities in the Subject Matter of the Decoration

In Chapter III the motifs, their prevalence and the types of architectural elements they adorn are presented (Tables 3-4 and Charts 1-2). The data clearly show that, in general, there is no direct correlation between certain types of architectural elements

and specific types of motifs. The predominant occurrence of a certain motif type on a specific type of architectural element – as in the case of medallions and lintels – can be linked to a practical reason; the space available for decoration and the form of the motif. The most common motifs are the geometric motifs, and on the whole it can be stated that more complex designs are also the least frequent. The majority of the motifs appear in all of the archaeological sites examined in this study and there are no particular motifs that can be linked to a specific Byzantine settlement.

In Chapter V the symbolic significance of the decorations is investigated. The comparative study shows that in the Byzantine world many motifs may have had some form of a symbolic meaning. These motifs are both symbols originating in pre-Christian cultural traditions and newly created ones. The prevalence of these motifs especially on architectural elements that form entrances suggests that they bore a symbolic religious-apotropaic meaning. This does not mean that all architectural decorations bear a symbolic significance: some may be purely decorative. However, in some cases, where elements are decorated with purely ornamental designs, it is possible that they are part of a greater scheme of decoration in which some elements were decorated with symbolic motifs.

#### 7.2.3 The Differences in the Decorative Compositions

In Chapter IV the most common types of compositions and the frequencies of the decorated elements were presented (Graphs 15-17, Table 15, Chart 17). The same trend illustrated in Chapter III is demonstrated with the data compiled in Chapter IV. The least complex compositions are the most common ones. The most prevalent compositions include designs created exclusively of geometric motifs or a combination of geometric and floral motifs. As opposed to the repetitiveness of the motifs, the compositions that are formed from them seem to be infinite. The only compositions that can be observed more than once are the simplest ones, usually including a combination of fillet moldings. It is interesting to note that even when two architectural elements are carved as a pair, and are found in situ, differences are intentionally created in the decoration. For example, two doorjamb bases in Oboda are decorated with compositions that appear similar, but are also noticeably different (Figure 41).<sup>3</sup>

#### 7.2.4 The Existence of Pattern Books

The many different decorational compositions and the repetitiveness of the motifs bring forth the question of the existences of pattern books. This question was also

<sup>3</sup> These are doorjamb bases OD.C.2.BP.10 and OD.C.2.BP.11 (pls. 124–125).





Figure 41: A pair of doorjamb bases from Oboda (photograph by the author).

raised in the study of another form of architectural ornamentation – mosaic floors. In a comparative study of 116 mosaic pavements, dated to the 4th–7th centuries CE, from the regions of Asia Minor and the Levant, C. Dauphin examined the possibility of the existence of Byzantine pattern books. <sup>4</sup> This research specifically focused on mosaics of the "Inhabited Scroll" type, and in a similar manner to the present study, compared the various motifs appearing in the pavements. On the whole, the most frequent subjects were animals and vegetal motifs. <sup>5</sup> Although the types of motifs found in the mosaic pavements are different from the types most commonly found in architectural decorations in the Negev, this may simply be a result of the more flexible nature of the medium of mosaic making. For instance, in the site of Mampsis, along with the architectural decorations documented in this study, there is a mosaic of the "Inhabited Scroll" type in the Western Church.

In her study, Dauphin concludes that the limited number of motifs indicates the existence of pattern books. These pattern books did not include designs for whole pavements, but were note-books or sketch-books, in which specific motifs were drawn. The mosaicist would create the final composition of the pavement, with ideas drawn from these sketch-books, and at times also his observations from nature. These sketch-books could have belonged either to an individual mosaicist or passed amongst the workers of particular schools or workshops. In the case of architectural decorations, a similar model is observed: a limited number of motifs and a great number of compositions. It is highly likely that a similar system may have existed in the case of stone architectural decorations.

The comparative study of the decorations did not provide any indications for the existence of specific workshops or schools that specialized in the production of

<sup>4</sup> Dauphin (1978).

<sup>5</sup> Dauphin (1978), 400-404.

<sup>6</sup> Dauphin (1978), 408-411.

the ornamented elements. In fact, the great variability in compositions and styles, for the most part, does not allow for the certain identification of specific craftsmen. It is rare to find two architectural elements with a similar style of decoration. The closest and one of the only examples can be seen in a comparison between the decoration of a column drum from the Central Church in Nessana and that of a doorjamb capital from the South Church at Shivta (Figure 42). The relatively high quality of the carving and the style of the depiction of certain motifs in the compositions appearing on both elements may reflect the work of the same craftsman; of course, this could not be suggested with any great amount of certainty.



Figure 42: Left: column drum NS.CL.10 from the Central Church at Nessana (pl. 249); above: doorjamb capital SH.P.CP.104 from the South Church at Shivta (pl. 63) (photographs by the author).

An even closer resemblance between two architectural elements originating from two different sites can be seen in the decoration of two lintels, one from Rehovot-in-the-Negev and the other from Sa'adon. The first was documented in the process of preparing this study, and the second was observed in a photograph located at the archives of the Israel Antiquities Authority and is no longer available for documentation (Figure 43). Although both of these lintels are fragmentary, the striking resemblance between them is obvious. Only a close examination of the frame surrounding the decoration provides any indication that these two are not the same architectural element. The existence of two such similar artifacts, one from Rehovot-in-the-Negev and the other from Sa'adon, is not entirely surprising considering the close geographical proximity of these two sites.

It is plausible that there were quite a few craftsmen who decorated the architectural elements and that this work was part of the process of the construction of all structures. It is likely that this skill was passed from father to son and that at times, due to economic considerations, even less-skilled stone cutters decorated some of the architectural elements. The two examples previously discussed are rare, but the

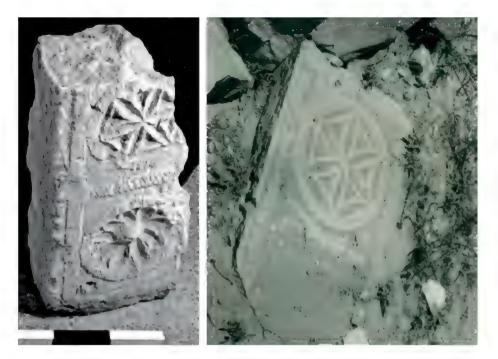


Figure 43: Left: lintel RN.LT.21 from Rehovot-in-the-Negev (pl. 283) (photograph by the author); above: lintel photographed at Sa'adon by the archaeologist Beno Rothenberg in 1950 (photograph courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority Archive).

close geographical proximity of Shivta and Nessana, and Rehovot-in-the-Negev and Sa'adon, lends to the suggestion that occasionally craftsmen traveled the short distances between the sites and that they were local workers. This conclusion is further strengthened by the survey of architectural decorations from the regions surrounding the Negev, in Chapter VI. In various sites in Syria, Jordan and Egypt, the decoration of architectural elements, produced in local raw materials, is on the whole of higher quality. This suggests that in the regions surrounding the Negev the craftsmen were better trained and that perhaps there was a greater imperial influence on the quality of their workmanship.

#### 7.2.5 The Technical Aspects of the Ornamentation and the Painted Decoration

The sources for the raw material of the decorated architectural elements and the carving technique are discussed in Chapter IV. The architectural elements from the Negev were carved in local limestone or chalk. The majority of the elements are decorated with relief carvings created in the chip-carving technique. The most frequent types of relief are bas reliefs, followed by sunken and high reliefs. Occasionally, an

architectural element is decorated with a combination of reliefs of varying heights. Additionally, some of the elements in the assemblage are decorated not with reliefs, but with engravings, or a combination of the two techniques. The engraved decorations are frequently incised into the surface of the stone with a thin instrument, usually not more than a few millimeters thick. This instrument was probably made of metal. In general, the engraved decorations appear to be of a lower quality than the chip-carved ones and may have been made by novices (e.g. Figure 17, Chapter V). These types of decorations should be separated from engravings that were made by the craftsman as markings in the preparation of the dressing of the architectural element (Figure 44). These markings were left visible on many of the architectural elements.



Figure 44: An engraved mark created by the craftsman in the preparation of cornice SH.A.11.CR.3 from the "Pool House" at Shivta (pl. 78) (photograph by the author).

It may be that hewing marks and various mason's marks were left on many of the decorated elements because they were not clearly visible to the beholder. These marks were obscured either by the location of the architectural element within the structure, or by paint that likely cover many, if not all, of the architectural elements. In some cases, remnants of paint have been observed, with the naked eye, on the artifacts; the frequency of paint remains on various types of architectural elements is illustrated in Table 17.

In Table 17, the architectural elements are ordered according to their location within the structure, with the last category being "elements of undefined architectural context". The greater frequency of a certain type of architectural element is inconsequential. The remains of paint on any of the elements are in a sense arbitrary, and determined by the artifact's state of preservation and possibly by its current location. In all cases, the remnants of paint are red and located directly on the surface of the architectural element. In most instances, the remnants are very scarce. This does

Table 17: Frequency of Architectural Elements with Remnants of Paint.

Type of Architectural Element	<b>Number of Painted Elements</b>
Floor Tiles	0
Bases and Podia	2
Doorjambs	0
Lintels	7
Columns	1
Capitals	12
Cornices	1
Arch Stones	13
Elements of Undefined Architectural Context	8
Total	44

not mean that only red paint was used for ornamentation, as can be seen from an example of a decorated doorjamb capital from the Byzantine monastery in Bawit, Egypt (Figure 45). This doorjamb capital is decorated both with black and red paint, both directly on the relief decoration and on the flat surface of the capital. It is highly probable that the vast majority of the decorated architectural elements of the Negev were decorated in a similar fashion. The reason for not finding remnants of other colors on the elements may relate to the specific resilience of the red paint used in antiquity.



Figure 45: A limestone doorjamb capital from the monastery at Bawit, Egypt - decorated with relief carvings and bichrome paint (Bénazeth2002, Fig. 22).

## 7.3 Chronology and Development of the Decoration

The architectural decorations of the Byzantine Negev lack the clearly defined chronology and development that can be observed in the decorations of the previous Late Roman period. There are no moldings that appear specifically on certain types of architectural elements and no apparent developmental patterns in the designs of the motifs and the compositions. The motifs are repeated more or less in the same format and most of them appear in all types of compositions, on all types of architectural elements and in both secular and religious contexts.

In fact, the only clear chronological observation that can be made is the great difference between the decorated architectural elements belonging to the Late Roman period and those that were created in the subsequent Byzantine Era. At the sites of Oboda and Mampsis, where these two different types of architectural ornamentations can be observed side by side, the differences are most striking. The decorated architectural elements of the Late Roman period contain more canonical motifs and the workmanship appears to be more refined. More attention is also paid to the polishing of the exposed surface of the decorated element and less hewing marks are left visible. In comparison, the decorated elements belonging to the Byzantine period appear to be more simplistically decorated, with more schematically executed motifs and a rougher looking finished product.

The architectural decorations of the Negev may be described as the most pristine example of local Byzantine art in the region of the Levant. All of the artifacts studied in this assemblage are made of local raw materials and plausibly by local craftsman. The locality of the workmanship is emphasized by the relatively simplistic nature of the decoration. The reason for the abundance of local craftsman in this region may be related to the massive construction endeavors that took place during the Byzantine period in a previously sparsely inhabited region. The recurrence of the same motifs throughout all the region of the Levant firmly connects the inhabitants of the Negev to a more universal Christian tradition; it is the prevalence of the decorations that emphasizes its importance in the daily life of the Byzantine people. The symbolic aspects presented in this study show that the ornamentation existed in a realm that transcends a mere decorational purpose. This form of art served not only to communicate a religious message, but also as a means of protection that reflected the hopes, and perhaps fears of the inhabitants of the Negev. In a way, by studying the architectural decorations of the Negev one gains a glimpse into the personal lives of a people living in a newly prospering periphery of the Byzantine Empire.

#### 7.4 Future Research

The study presented here was conducted with the intent of providing the most comprehensive analysis of the decorated architectural elements of the Negev region up to date. Nevertheless, this research tackled a very broad topic and certain aspects could not be examined. It is my hope that further research may provide additional pieces to the puzzle of our knowledge regarding the Byzantine Negev. For example, some supplementary "missing pieces" include the architectural decorations of domestic structures, the majority of which have vet to be explored. During the course of the research I documented six decorated architectural elements located in unexcavated areas in the site of Rehovot-in-the-Negev. These elements include five doorjamb capitals (some of which may be bases) and one cornice. Due to time constraints, these elements could not be documented as fully as the other architectural elements in the assemblage and were not included in the analysis. However, their photographs appear in plates 358–363 in the appendix and their general measurements are recorded in the database. The location of these artifacts at the site can be seen on plan 24.<sup>7</sup> These elements were located among the collapse heaps of structures that appear to be domestic dwellings and were noted as a case in point to show what further knowledge can be gained even without conducting additional costly archaeological excavations at these Byzantine settlements.

<sup>7</sup> The inventory labels of these elements are: RN.CP.115.cf, RN.CP.116.cf, RN.CP.117.cf, RN.CP.118.cf, RN.CP.119.cf and RN.CP.63.cf. The addition of the abbreviation cf. at the end of the inventory label is provided to indicate that these elements were not part of the original assemblage that was thoroughly analyzed during the research.

## **Abbreviations**

AJA American Journal of Archaeology

Art Hist. Art History

BAR British Archaeological Reports

BASOR Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research

CAH The Cambridge Ancient History

ECA Eastern Christian Art

IEJ Israel Exploration Journal

JFA Journal of Field Archaeology

JGE The Journal of General Education

JRA Journal of Roman Archaeology

JSAI Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam

JWI Journal of the Warburg Institute
HTR Harvard Theological Review

NEAHL The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land

NovT Novum Testementum

PEQ Palestine Exploration Quarterly

Qadmoniot Quarterly for the Antiquities of Eretz Israel and Biblical Lands

TA Tel Aviv – Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University

ZDPV Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palaestina - Vereins

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## **Plates**

## Shivta







general view\_west



front\_west



front-detail\_west



right depth side\_south



back\_east

SH.A.10.BP.2





front\_west



left depth side\_north



left depth side-detail\_north



back\_east

general view\_west



front\_west



front-detail\_west



right depth side\_south

## SH.N.2.BP.49



front\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north



back\_west

SH.N.2.BP.50



front\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north



back\_west

Plate 6



front\_south



front\_west



front-detail\_south



right depth side\_east



back\_north

SH.C.1.BP.16



front\_south



front\_southeast



depth side and front\_northwest



left depth side\_west



back\_north

SH.I.1.BP.39



front\_south



left depth side\_east





back\_west

SH.I.1.BP.40



front\_south



right depth side\_west



back\_north



front\_south





back\_north



front\_east



left depth side\_south



back\_west



front\_east



right depth side\_north



back\_west





general view\_east



front\_east



front-detail\_east



left depth side\_south



back\_west

## Plate 14 SH.P.BP.46 front\_east general view\_east left depth side\_south front-detail\_east

back\_west

right depth side\_north

SH.P.3.BP.47 Plate 15 general view\_north front\_east front-detail 2\_east front-detail 1\_east

front-detail 3\_east

left depth side\_north





front-close up\_east



front-detail 2\_east





front\_east



front-detail 1\_east



right depth side\_north

SH.P.7.BP.59





general view\_northeast



front\_north



front-detail\_north



front\_south



front-detail\_south



front\_west

SH.P.7.BP.61





front\_north



front-detail\_north



front\_west



front\_south





front 1



front 2



front 4



front 3



top

SH.C.1.BP.17



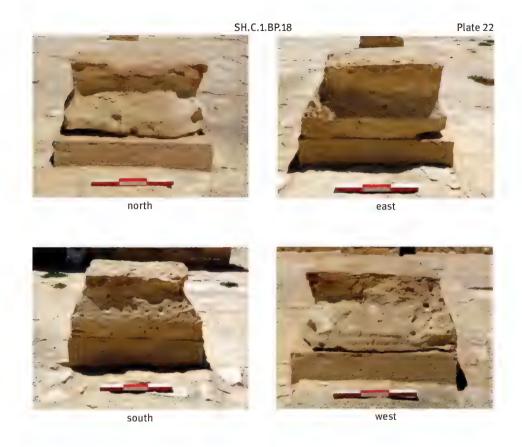
front\_west



left depth side\_north



right depth side\_south



SH.C.1.BP.19

Plate 23





north

east





south

west



north



east



west



top



SH.C.1.BP.23





general view\_west



north



east



south







general view\_east



north



east



south



west





north



east



south



west





front\_west



left depth side\_north



right depth side\_south

SH.V.1.DJ.11





front



top or bottom



bottom or top





left or right depth side





right or left depth side



top or bottom





general view\_east



front\_east



front-detail bottom stone\_east



right depth side\_north



front-detail top stone\_east



left depth side\_south



base of doorjamb\_east

general view\_east

SH.P.1.DJ.4



front\_east



front-detail\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north



top



back\_west

general view\_east



front\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north



back\_west



back close up\_west



general view\_east



front\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north



back\_west

SH.S.1.DJ.10



general view\_west



front\_west





left depth side\_north

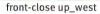


back\_northeast





front\_west





back\_east



bottom

SH.N.2.LT.42



front\_east



front close up\_east



back\_west



bottom



front



front and right depth side



front\_east



front close up\_east



front-center medallion\_east



front-palm branch\_east



back\_west



SH.F.2.LT.39 Plate 42 front\_north front-left medallion\_north front-right medallion\_north front-center medallion\_north

bottom

back\_south

SH.G.LT.16





front\_east



front\_south



depth side\_north



bottom or top\_east

SH.Q.1.LT.32



Plate 45



front-close up



right or left depth side



front-detail



top or bottom





general view



front



front-detail



front-close up



top or bottom

SH.N.2.LT.41



front\_east



front-left medallion\_east



front-right medallion\_east



back\_west



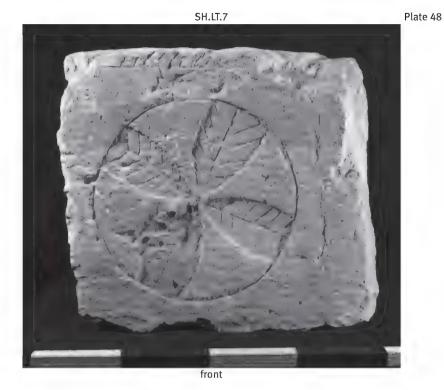
front-center medallion\_east



front-bird detail\_east



bottom

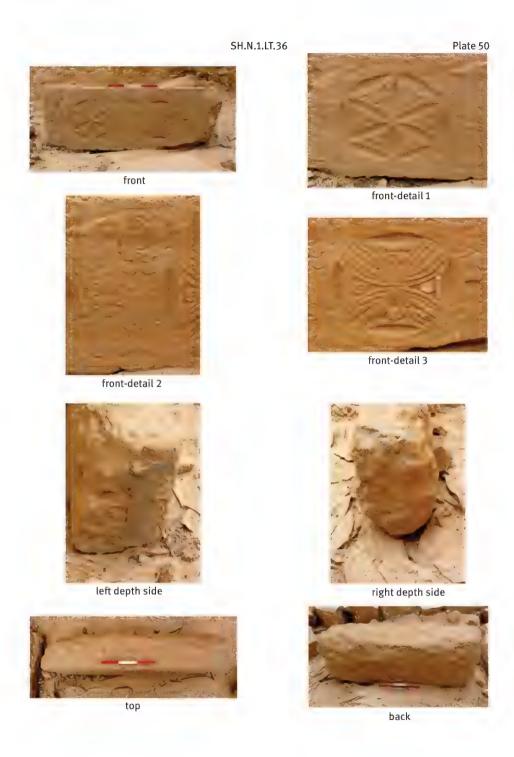




front



front and depth side



SH.P.6.LT.5





front



left depth side



right depth side



top



## SH.N.LT.40



front\_north



front-detail of left section





front-left section\_north



front-center section\_north



front-detail of center section



front-right section\_north



front-detail of right section



back\_south



bottom





front



left depth side



back

SH.F.1.CP.37 Plate 55



front



right depth side



back

SH.H.1.CP.42



general view



front



left depth side



front and left depth side

Plate 57



front



left depth side



right depth side and bottom



right depth side



back



front

SH.F.2.CP.43







front



right depth side



back



general view



front



left depth side



front and right depth side



back and left depth side

SH.P.CP.99





general view\_east



front\_east



front\_northeast

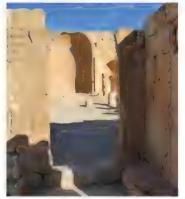


left depth side\_south



back\_West





general view\_east



front\_east



right depth side\_north



front\_southeast



back\_west

SH.P.CP.104





front\_north



left depth side\_east



back\_south



front\_north



right depth side\_west



back\_south

SH.D.1.CP.120







left depth side

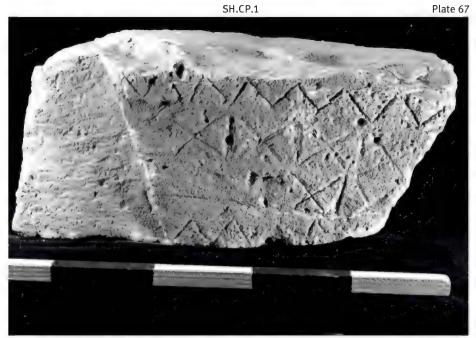








front



front



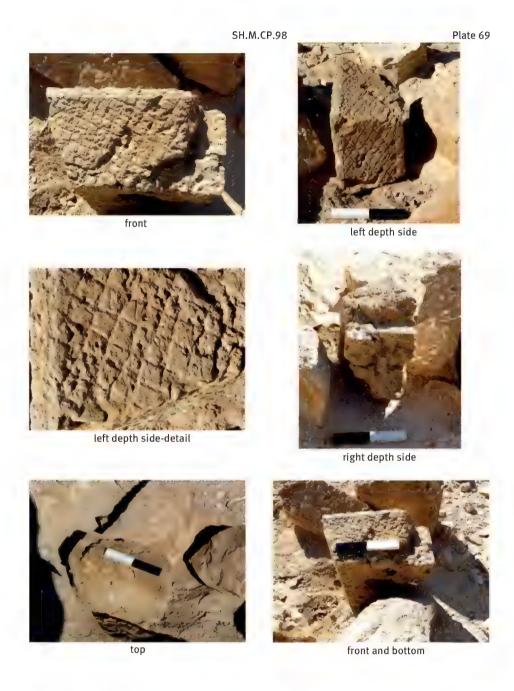
front

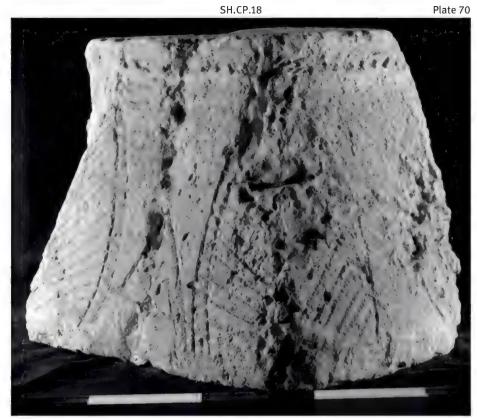


front-detail



right depth side





front

SH.CP.51 Plate 71



front



front and left depth side



right depth side

## SH.N.2.CP.106



front\_east



front\_north



left depth side\_south



back\_west

SH.N.2.CP.107



front\_east



front\_south



right depth side\_north



back\_west





front 1



front 2



front 3



front-detail



top

SH.U.CP.103



front 1



front 2



front 3



front 4 and top



painted decoration



detail of painted decoration



front

SH.A.11,CR.2



general view\_east



front\_east



front\_detail\_east



left depth side\_north



right depth side\_south

SH.A.11.CR.3



general view east



front\_east



front-detail\_east



left depth side\_north



right depth side\_south

SH.A.11.CR.4



Plate 79

general view\_west



front\_west



front-detail\_north



left depth side\_west



right depth side\_north



general view\_west



front\_west



front-detail\_west



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north

SH.1.1.CR.50



general view\_north



front\_north



front-detail\_north



left depth side\_east



right depth side\_west

SH.P.2.CR.56



general view\_east



front\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north



top

SH.P.3.CR.57





general view\_east



front\_east



front-detail\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north



general view\_south





general view\_west



front\_south



front-detail\_south

SH.A.9.CR.7





general view\_south



front\_south



front-detail\_south



general view\_north



front\_north



front-detail\_north

SH.E.1.CR.33



front



left depth side





top



bottom



front



left depth side



right depth side



bottom



back

SH.N.1.CR.58



front\_north



front-detail\_north



left depth side\_east



right depth side\_west

SH.N.1.CR.59



general view\_north



front\_north



left depth side\_east



right depth side\_west



tot

SH.A.12.CR.1 Plate 91



general view\_south



front\_south



front-detail\_south



front



left side of bottom



right depth side



bottom



back

Plate 93



general view\_north





left depth side\_west



front-detail\_north



right depth side\_west

SH.L.1.CR.51



general view\_south



front\_south



front-detail\_south



left depth side\_west



right depth side\_west

SH.C.1.CR.32 Plate 95



front



front-close up



left depth side



right depth side



back





general view\_south



front\_south



right depth side\_west





front and bottom



front-datail



bottom and back

SH.M.CR.54 Plate 99



decorated side 1



decorated side 2



undecorated side 1



undecorated side 2



bottom





left depth side



front and bottom



bottom



back and bottom



front and bottom



left depth side



right depth side



bottom and back



detail of paint remains on bottom side

SH.M.AR.13





front



left depth side and bottom



right depth side



bottom



remnants of red paint on bottom



back

SH.M.AR.15



top and front



front-detail\_remnants of red paint



top



top-detail\_remnants of red paint



left depth side



right depth side



back



front



left depth side and front



bottom

SH.P.1.AR.16



general view\_south



general view-close up\_south



front-close up\_south



front and bottom\_southeast



top\_west



general view\_south



front\_south



top\_south



front\_close up\_south



bottom\_south

## Plate 107 SH.P.1.AR.18 general view\_south front\_south front-detail\_south top\_east

bottom-detail\_west

bottom\_west



front



front-detail\_red paint remains



left depth side



right depth side



bottom

SH.N.1.AR.24





front



left depth side



right depth side



back and bottom



bottom

SH.I

front



left depth side



bottom and part of right depth side



bottom and front



bottom



back

Plate 111



front and bottom



left depth side



back



front



front-detail



left depth side and bottom



right depth side and bottom



bottom

Plate 113



front



left depth side



right depth side



bottom



back



SH.N.1.AR.23

Plate 115



front



front-close up



left depth side



right depth side



bottom



back



front

Plate 117



front



front-detail



left or right depth side



right or left depth side



top or bottom





front



front-detail



left or right depth side



right or left depth side



top or bottom

## Oboda



general view to the west



front-detail view to the est

OD.E.5.FT.3 Plate 121



front\_east



front-detail\_west





general view\_east



front\_east



right depth side\_north



front\_south



back\_west

Plate 123





general view\_north



general view front\_east



left depth side\_south



front\_east



back\_west

OD.C.2.BP.10



general view of the entrance



general view\_north



front-close up\_north



depth side-detail\_west



front\_north



left depth side\_west



back\_south

OD.C.2.BP.11





general view\_north



front\_north



front-close up\_north



left depth side\_east



left depth side-detail\_east



back\_south





general view of front side\_north



front\_north



depth side\_west



depth side-detail 2\_west



front\_detail\_north



depth side-detail 1\_west



back\_south



general view\_west

OD.D.1.BP.30



north



east



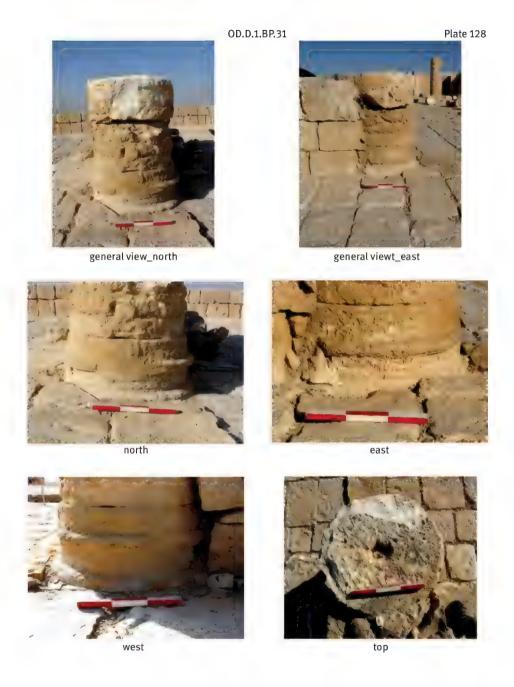
south



west



top



OD.D.1.BP.32





north



east



south



west



OD.D.1.BP.34





general view\_east



east



general view\_south 2



general view\_south 1



south





general view\_south



south



west



north



east

Plate 133



general view\_south



south



west



north



east



front\_north



back\_south

OD.G.1.LT.17 Plate 135



front



front-detail 1



front-detail 2



front



detail-left side of front



detail-left of center of front side



detail-center of front side



detail-right of center of front

OD.T.LT.20





detail-right side of front



left depth side



right depth side



left depth side and top



back





front



front-detail

Plate 138



front



front-detail of left section



front-detail of right section



rigt depth side



front-detail of middle section



left depth side



top



front of right section



front of left section



left depth side of right section



right depth side of right section were element was broken



front and left depth side were element was broken



top of right section



top of left section



front and bottom of right section



back of left section



general view\_north



Plate 140



detail of the center of the decoration



detail of the animal on the left



detail of the animal on the right



detail of the rosette and column on the left



detail of the rosette and column on the right



detail of capital of column on the right



detail of the base of the column on the right







front-close up



front and left depth side



left depth side



left depth side-close up



top

bottom



depression-close up



front\_north



fron-close up\_north



top of front side-detail\_north



bottom of front side-detail\_north



front\_north



left depth side\_east



left depth side-close up\_east

Plate 144b



left depth side-detail\_east



left depth side-detail 1\_west



left depth side\_east



top left depth side-detail\_east



left depth side-detail 2\_west



right depth side-close up\_west



right depth side\_west



front or depth side 1



front or depth side 2



bottom



bottom and back

OD.E.5.CP.45





front



left depth side



right depth side



top



bottom



general view



front



depth side









depth side

front\_north



front-close up\_north



right depth side\_east



back\_south



front





left depth side



rigth depth side



rigth depth side and back



front



front\_north



front view to northeast



front view to northwest



front\_north



front view to northeast



front view to northwest



general view\_east



front\_east



left depth side\_south



front-detail\_east



right depth side\_north



general view\_east



front\_east



front-detail\_east



front and left depth side\_south



front and right depth side\_north



right depth side\_north



general view\_east



front\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north

OD.C.5.CR.18





general view\_west



front\_west



left depth side\_north



right depth side\_south

## OD.C.5.CR.19





general view\_west



front\_west



left depth side\_north



right depth side\_south

OD.C.5.CR.20



general view\_west



front\_west



left depth side\_north



right depth side\_south



general view\_east



front\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north

OD.C.4.CR.22





general view\_east



front\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north

general view\_west

OD.C.4.CR.23





front\_west



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north



general view\_east



.CR.35 Plate 164



front\_east



front-detail\_east



left depth side\_south



right depth side north



right depth side-close up\_north



front\_south



front view to southeast



front view to southwest

OD.C.7.CR.24





general view\_north



front\_north



front view to northeast



general view\_north



front\_north



front view to northeast

OD.C.7.CR.26





general view\_south



front\_south



left depth side\_west



right depth side\_east



general view\_north



front\_north



left depth side\_east



right depth side\_west

OD.J.AR.25

bottom





depth side 1



depth side 2



depth side 3



depth side 4



Plate 172



bottom



bottom-detail





depth side 2



depth side 3



depth side 4



top





general view\_south

OD.E.3.AR.6



close up of decorated arch\_south



front of voussoir\_south



front of voussoirs\_south



bottom of voussoir\_southeast



bottom of voussoirs\_southwest



front



front-close up



right side



left side and front

OD.D.4.AR.5



front

Plate 176



top and front



right side



left side



bottom

OD.E.4.AR.7

Plate 177





front





Plate 178



front



depth side 1



top or bottom side



depth side 2



bottom or top side



front



depth side



top or bottom side



back

OD.UC.14 Plate 180



front





top of front side



bottom of front side

OD.E.3.UC.15





front

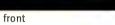


front-detail

OD.D.10.UC.13









depth side



top or bottom side



bottom or top side

Plate 184

OD.UC.16



front





rosette in center of front side



detail of fish right of the medallion



front and right depth side



detail of fish left of the medallian



front and left depth side



front and bottom side

# Mampsis



general view\_north



front-detail\_north



right depth side\_west



back\_south

MP.E.1.BP.52



front north



front and side\_northeast



rigth depth side-detail\_west



back-detail\_south

MP.E.1.BP.53







front\_northwest



left depth side-detail\_east



front\_north



left depth side\_east



back\_south



front



right depth side



top



top and right depth side



top and back



front



left depth side



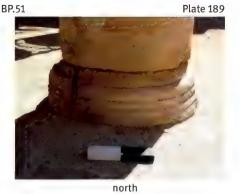
top





top and back











general view\_east



.DJ.7 Plate 190



front\_east



front-close up\_east



front-detail\_east



right depth side\_south



depth side-detail\_south



back\_west





top or bottom and back

top or bottom



front



one depth side





top or bottom



bottom or top



front



one depth side

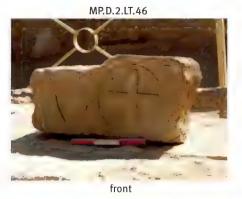


second depth side



top or bottom

Plate 196







second depth side



top



back

general view\_east



front-detail 1\_east



front-detail 3\_east

## MP.A.5.LT.44

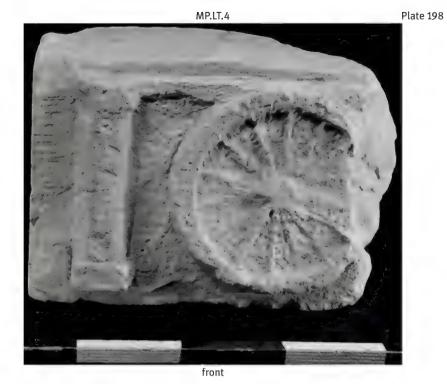


front\_east



front-detail 2\_east







front



one depth side



second depth side



one depth side



bottom and front

MP.LT.34



Plate 200





front-detail 1



front-detail 2



right detail side and front



top and front



general view\_south

## MP.A.7.LT.45



front\_south



front-detail 1\_south



front-detail 2\_south



front-detail 3\_south



MP.LT.15

Plate 202



front



front-detail 1



front-detail 3



front-detail 2



front-detail 4

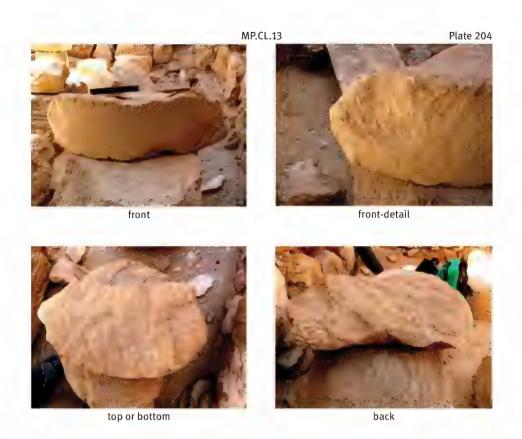




front - detail



side and top or bottom



front and bottom



left depth side-close up



right depth side and bottom



left depth side



right depth side



bottom

front



left depth side and top



right depth side and top



right depth side



top



back

bottom and front



right depth side



bottom



left depth side



right depth side-close up



back



MP.CP.79

Plate 208



front

bottom and front



bottom and left depth side



bottom and right depth side



front



right depth side



left depth side



back





front



left depth side



bottom and left depth side



bottom



back



front



front-detail



left depth side



right depth side



top





front



front detail



left depth side



right depth side



top



top-close up

front





left depth side



right depth side



right depth side-close up



top



back



bottom and front



left depth side



right depth side



right depth side and bottom



bottom



back and bottom

MP.A.6.CP.110



general view\_east



front\_east



front\_north



front-detail\_east



front\_south



front and bottom



Plate 216



front-close up



left depth side



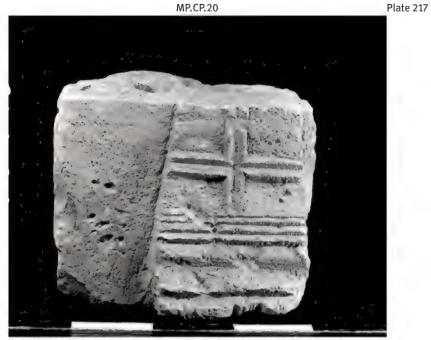
right depth side



top



bottom



front



front



right depth side



top and left depth side



top and back



front



front-close up



left depth side



right depth side



bottom



back

front



left depth side



left depth side and bottom



bottom



back





right depth side and back



right depth side-close up



back



left depth side and close



left depth side



top



bottom

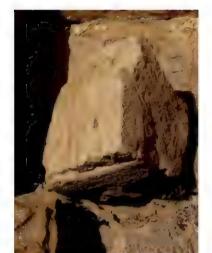


P.76 Plate 222



left depth side

front



right depth side and top



top



front



front and top



front and right depth side



left depth side



bottom and front



front



front-detail



front and right depth side



front and left depth side



bottom and front



front



top and front



top and left depth side



top and right depth side



top



top and front



top



top-close up



left depth side



right depth side

front\_west



left depth side\_south



right depth side\_north

## MP.D.1.CR.61



front-close up\_west



left depth side-close up\_south



right depth side-close up\_north

back-detail

MP.A.1.CR.60 Plate 228 front-detail front left depth side back and right depth side

back



right depth side\_east

MP.F.1.AR.30



bottom



left or right depth side



front or back

AR.30 Plate 230



bottom detail



right or left depth side



back or front



front\_south



front-detail 1\_south



front-detail 3\_south



bottom



front-detail 2\_south



top



back\_north

MP.B.UC.35





general view\_south



front\_south



front-detail 1\_south



front-detail 2\_south



left side\_west





front



one depth side



second depth side



bottom

front

MP.UC.5



front-detail



one depth side



second depth side



front and top or bottom



front and bottom or top



front



detail of front



top and second depth side



top and one depth side



top





front



front and one depth side



second depth side



top and bottom and front



top or bottom



top and front



top and one depth side



top and second depth side



top



back

MP.UC.34 Plate 239



front



front

## MP.UC.27









front

one depth side



second depth side



top and front



bottom and front

## Nessana







front-detail 1



front-detail 2



left depth side



right depth side



top



back



NS.BP.6





front



left depth side and top



top



right depth side



back and right depth side

NS.BP.14



front



left depth side



right depth side



top and front

NS.BP.56





front



front-close up



left depth side



top



back



front



front-detail



right side



left side



top



front



front-close up



right side



left side



top

NS.CL.10



front



front-close up



right side



left side



top

NS.CP.57





front



left depth side





back





front



left depth side



right depth side



top



back

Plate 252



front



left depth side



top



right depth side



back



NS.CP.71

front



front-detail



left depth side



right depth side



top



back





front



front-detail 1



front-detail 2



front-detail 3



front-detail 4



left depth side



top

NS.CP.72





front





right depth side



left depth side



top



front



left depth side



top



right depth side



back

NS.CP.67





front





right depth side



top



bottom



front



right depth side



top



left depth side



back



front





front-detail



left depth side



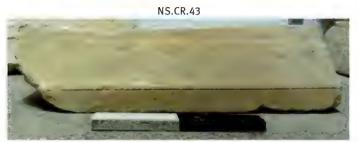
right depth side and top



top



back



front



left depth side



Plate 261

right depth side



top



back

NS.CR.47





front



left depth side and bottom



right depth side



top



bottom and back



bottom



front



left depth side



NS.UC.20 Plate 264



front



right depth side



top



front





front-detail 1



front-detail 2



front-detail 3



right depth side



top



top and back





front



left depth side



right depth side



top



back

NS.UC.23



front



left depth side



right depth side



detail of top left corner



detail of top right corner



top



back

## Be'er-Sheva







front



front



front



front-detail



front and left depth side



left depth side



left depth side-detail



front





front



side 1



side 2

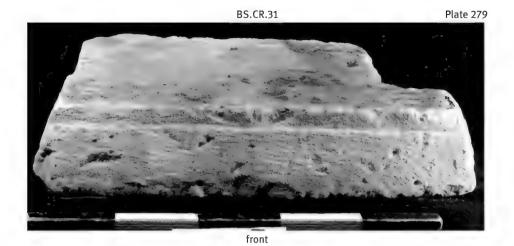


side 3

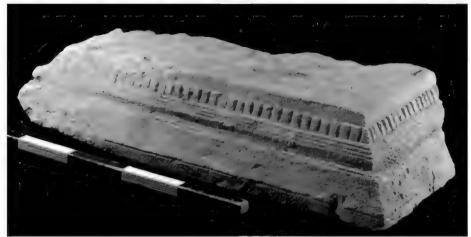
BS.CP.12 Plate 278



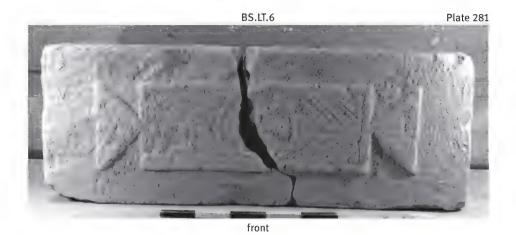
front



BS.CR.30 Plate 280



front





front

## Rehovot-in-the-Negev

Plate 283



RN.CP.64





front



left depth side



right depth side and bottom



bottom



RN.CP.62



front

Plate 286



left depth side



back and bottom



bottom



front



left depth side and front



top



front and right depth side



front and bottom

RN.CP.61



front



right depth side



left depth side



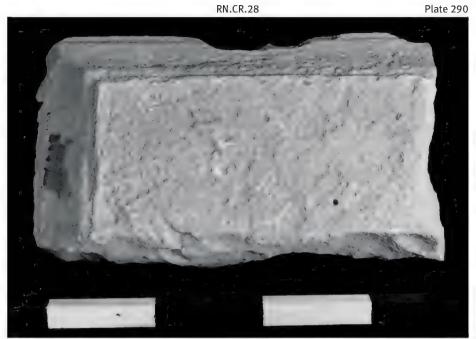
bottom and front



bottom



front



front



front and bottom



left depth side and bottom



right depth side



right depth side and bottom



back and bottom

RN.CR.36





front



front-detail



bottom and front



front and bottom



left depth side



bottom

RN.UC.21





front



left depth side



right depth side



back



bottom

## Sa'adon

SD.DJ.14



front



one depth side



second depth side

SD.CR.65





front



left depth side



right depth side



back



front



right depth side



bottom

SD.AR.34





front



front and top or bottom



depth side



top or bottom

## Elusa

EL.LT.10





front



front-left fragment



front-right fragment



front



left depth side



left depth side-detail





front-detail



left depth side-detail

## **Decorated Architectural Elements from Unknown Sites**

NT.BP.57

front







bottom and front





front

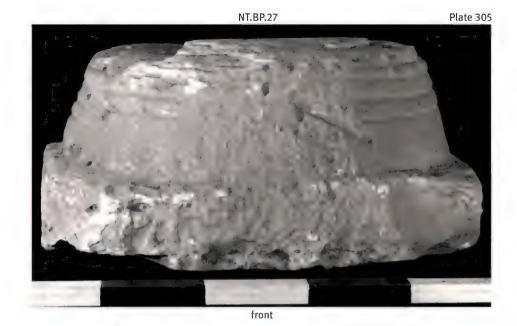




Plate 306







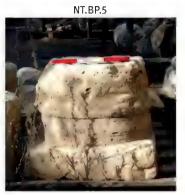








top



side 1



side 2



side 3



detail



top



front



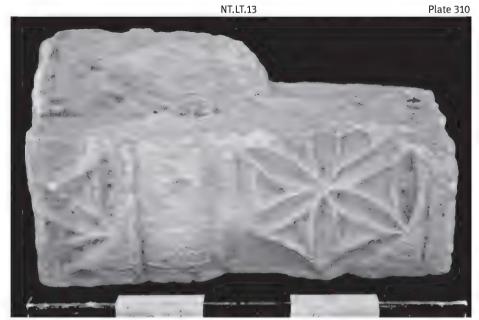
front and right depth side



front



front and depth side



front



front



front and one depth side



front and second depth side



NT.LT.29





front



detail of left section of front



detail of right section of front



bottom and front

NT.LT.22 Plate 314

front



front and right depth side



front-detail 1



front-detail 2







front



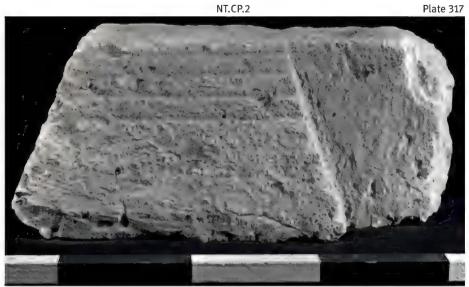
front



front and depth side



suggested reconstruction



front



front



front-close up



front and right depth side



front-detail



right dept side



right depth side-close up



right depth side-detail





front



front-close up



left depth side



front-bead and reel band



NT.CP.54

front and top



right depth side



left depth side and top



back



top



front

Plate 324



front



left depth side



top



front



front



front



front



front



front





front



front and depth side

NT.CP.23 Plate 332



front or depth side



depth side or front





front



front and left depth side



left depth side



front

NT.CP.34





front



right depth side



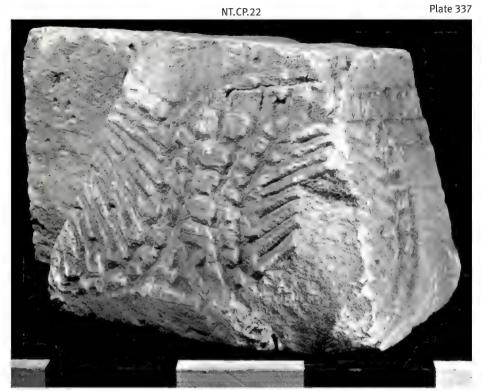
back



top



bottom



front and depth side

front



right depth side



right depth side-close up



left depth side



back



top

Plate 339





front



front and right depth side



front and left depth side



depth side and front

NT.CP.21 Plate 341



front



front



NT.CR.40 Plate 344







front, bottom and left depth side



left depth side and bottom



bottom



front







front-close up



front



front and depth side

NT.AR.9 Plate 348



front



depth and top sides

Plate 349



front



depth and front sides



NT.AR.3 Plate 350





top

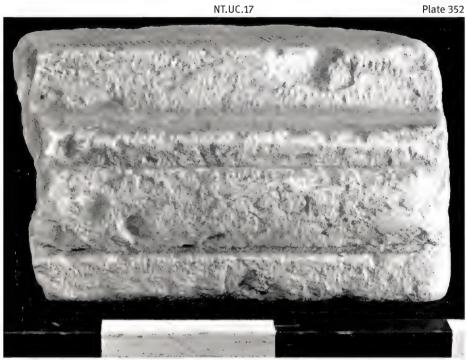




front and depth side



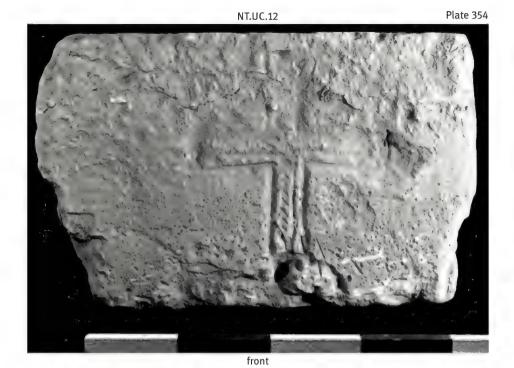
top, front and depth side



front



front





front

NT.UC.9 Plate 356



front



depth side



front



front-detail



front and depth side

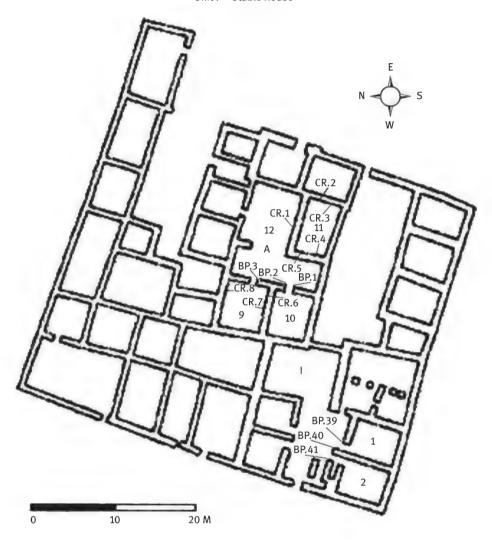
## **Plans**



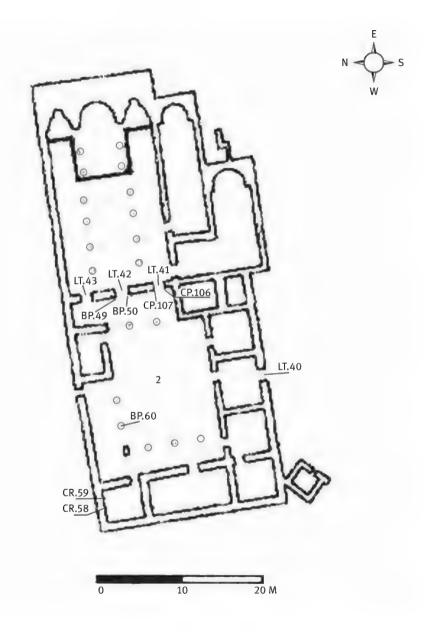


SHIVTA Plan 2

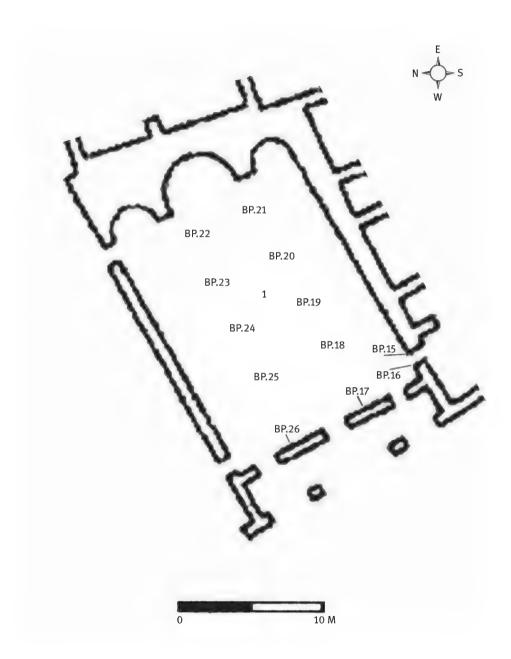
Unit A - "Pool House"
Unit I - "Stable House"



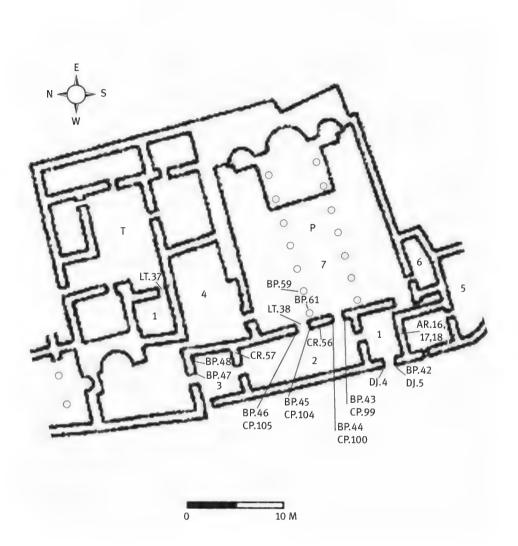
Unit N - North Church



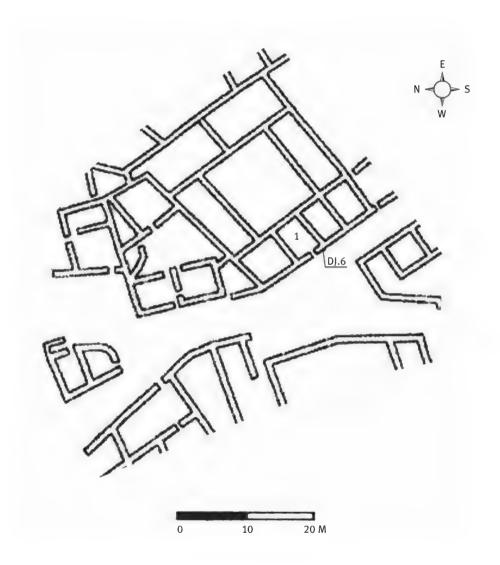
Unit C - Central Church



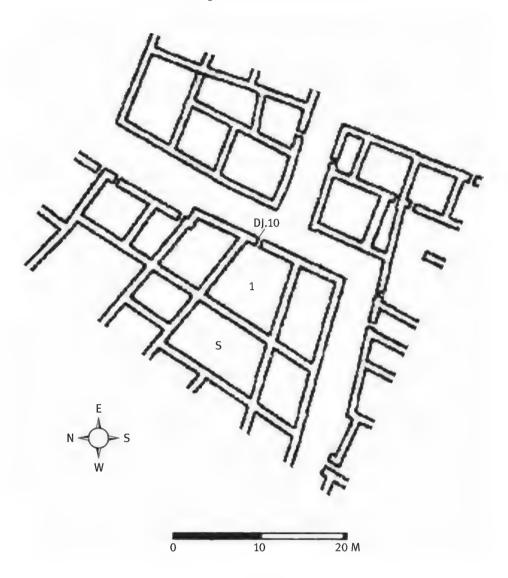
Unit P - South Church
Unit T - Dwelling Adjacent to the South Church and the Mosque



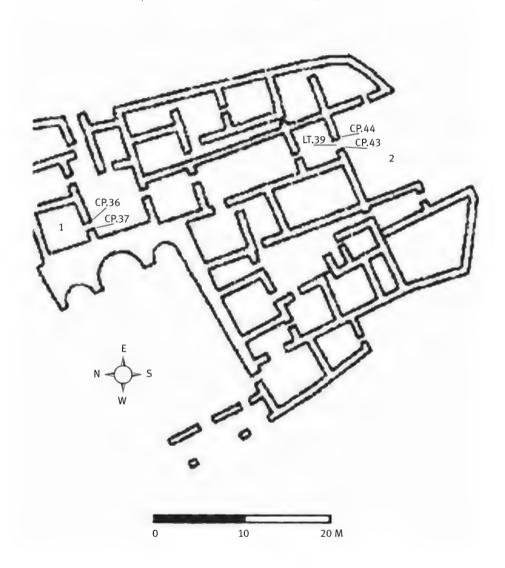
Unit R - Dwelling in the Northeastern Quarter



Unit S - Dwelling in the Western Section of the Site

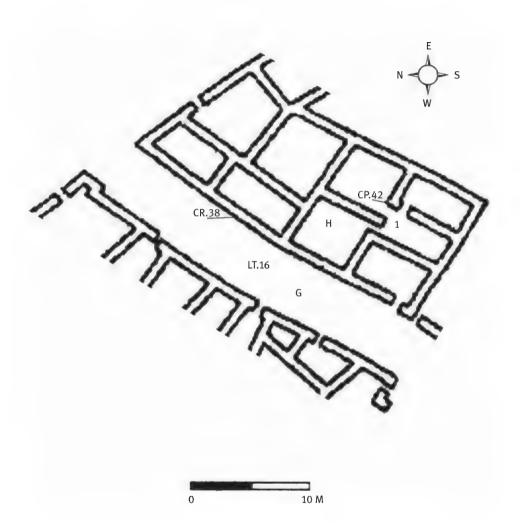


Unit F - Complex South and East of Central Church ("Governor's House")

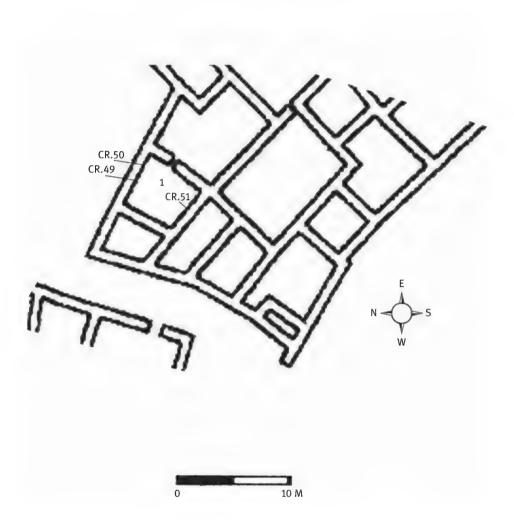


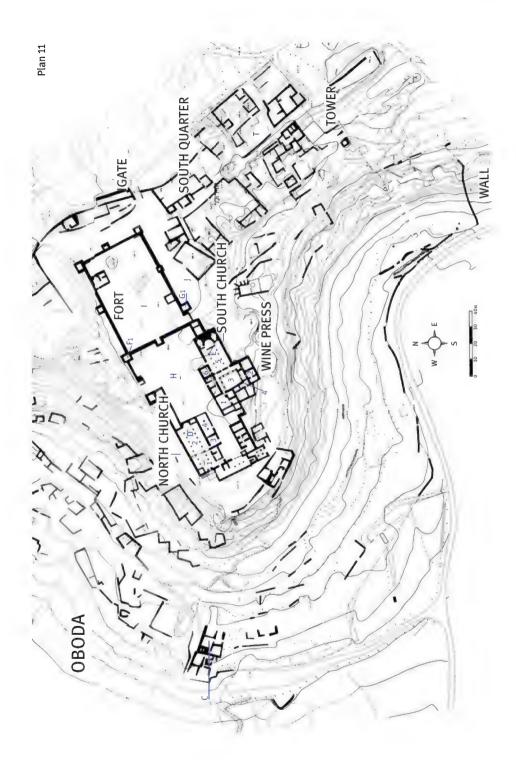
Unit G - Street Leading to the Central Church

Unit H - Dwelling used by the Colt Expedition

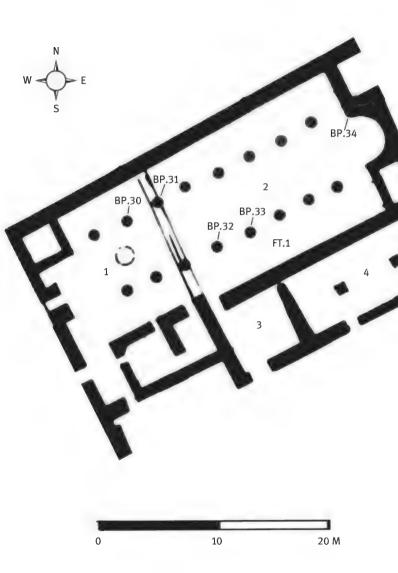


Unit L - Dwelling in Southern Section of Site





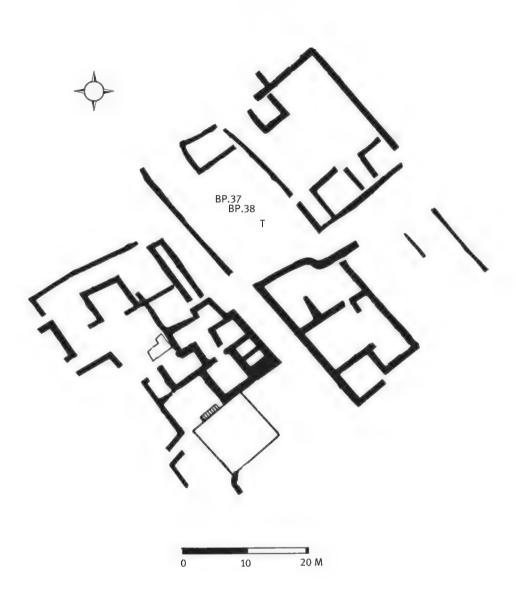
Unit D - The North Church

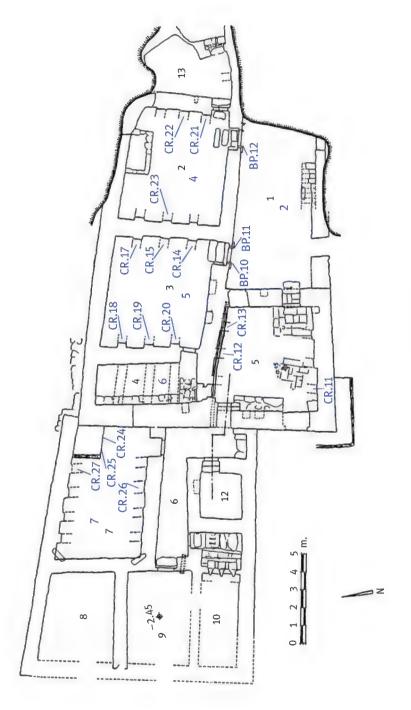


Unit E - The South Church



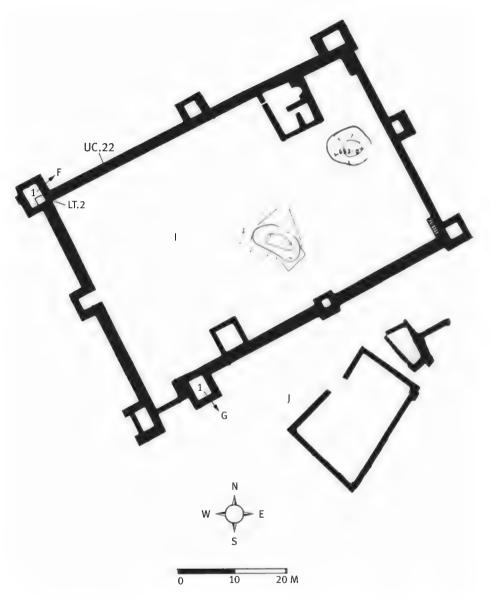
Unit T - Building T

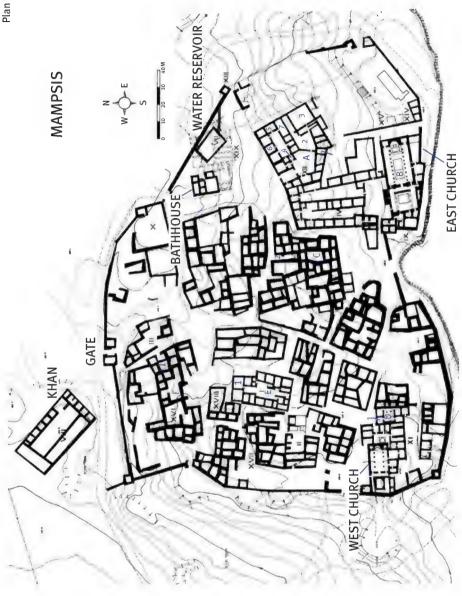




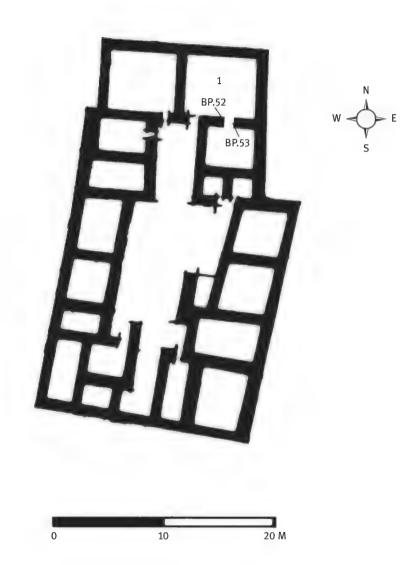
Unit C - The Byzantine Dwelling

Units F, G, I and J - The Fort and its Environs

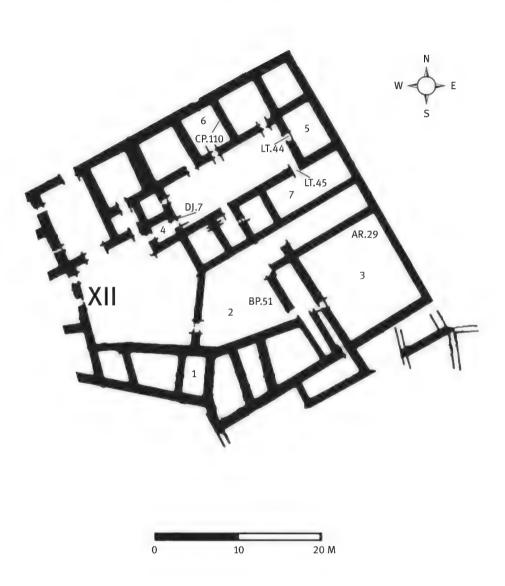




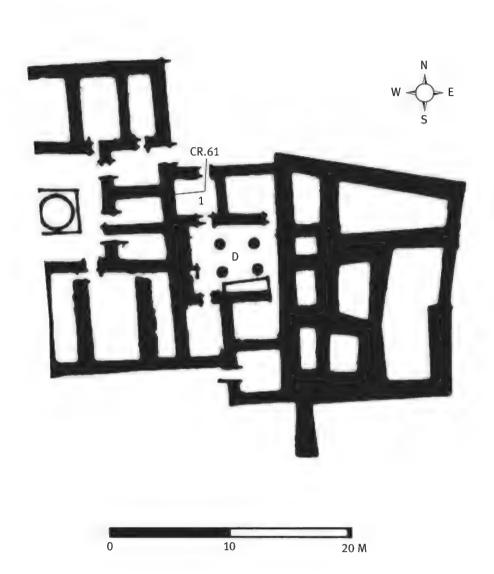
Unit E - Building I



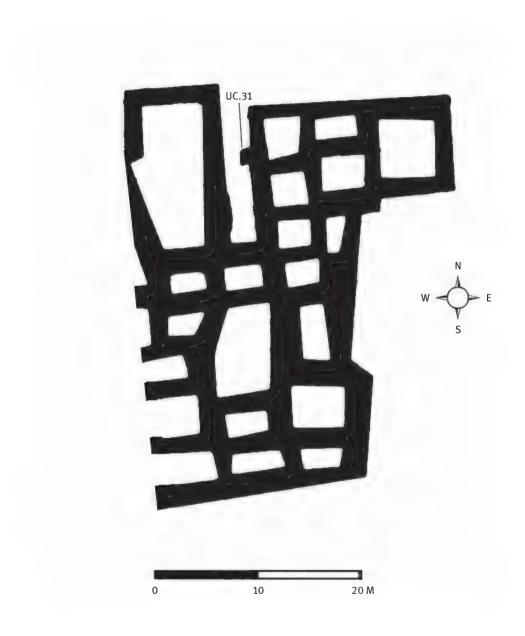
Unit A - Building XII



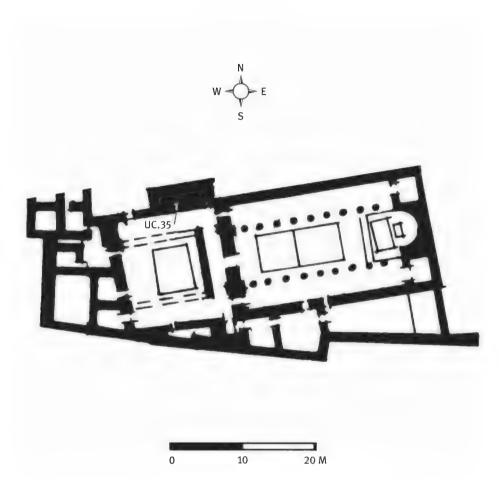
Unit D - The Stable House

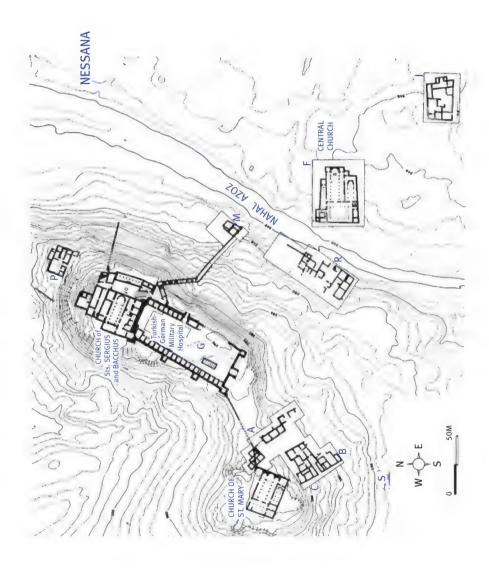


Unit C - Dwelling Complex

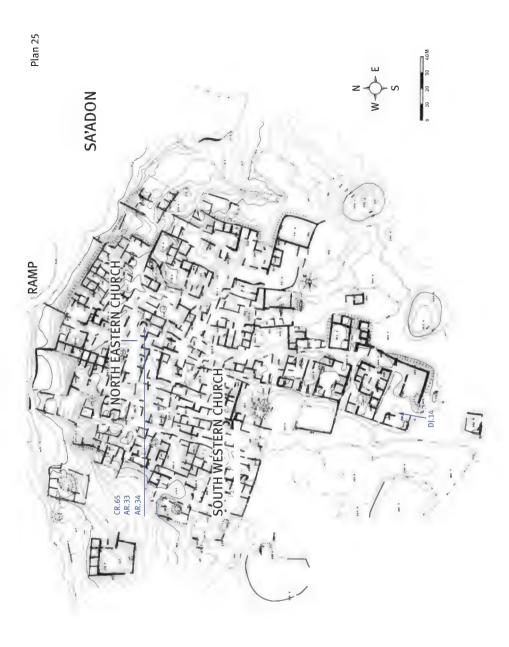


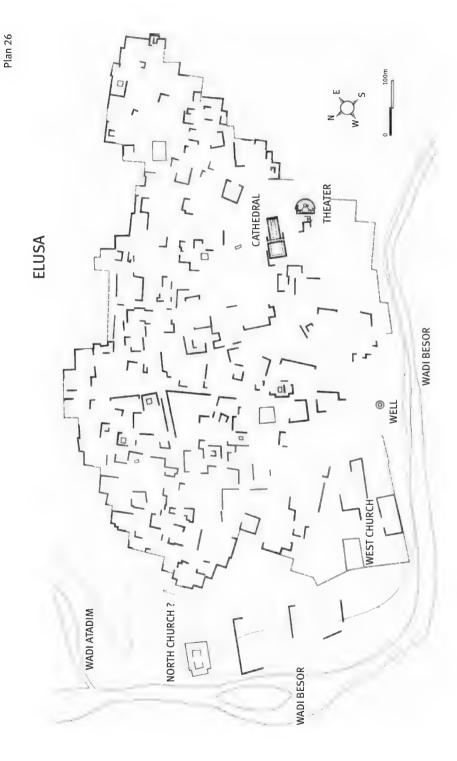
Unit B - The East Church











## **Appendix**

## Rehovot-in-the-Negev



front



right depth side



top



https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110631760-012

RN.CP.116.cf



front



front-close up



Plate 359

left depth side



right depth side



top and back

RN.CP.117.cf





front



left depth side



right depth side



back

RN.CP.118.cf





front or depth side



top or bottom



possibly back 1



possibly back 2

RN.CP.119.cf





front



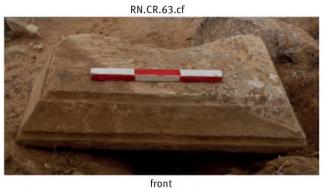
front-detail



right depth side



top





left depth side



right depth side